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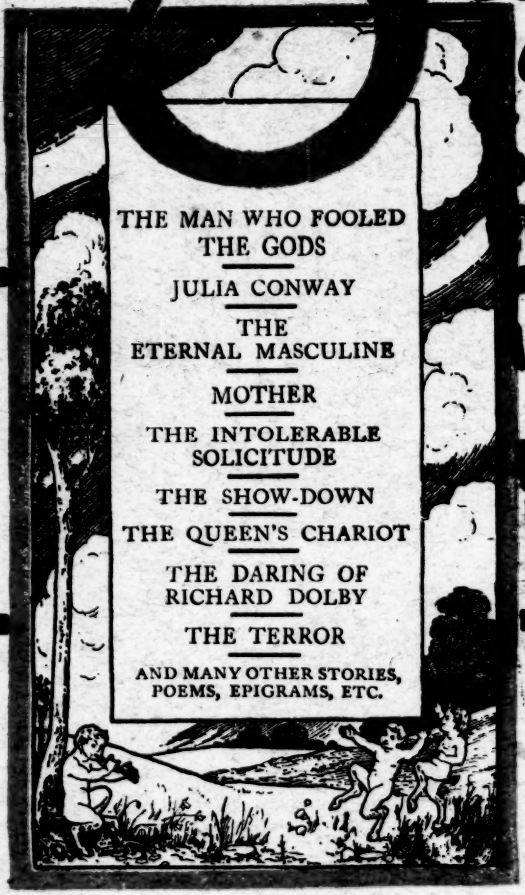
THE SMART SET

A Magazine of Cleverness

To Amuse, Not to Instruct



THE MAN WHO FOOLED THE GODS

JULIA CONWAY

THE ETERNAL MASCULINE

MOTHER

THE INTOLERABLE SOLICITUDE

THE SHOW-DOWN

THE QUEEN'S CHARIOT

THE DARING OF RICHARD DOLBY

THE TERROR

AND MANY OTHER STORIES, POEMS, EPIGRAMS, ETC.

MAY 1919

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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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Editor—J. W. PULNE

MAY, 1919

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* * * * *

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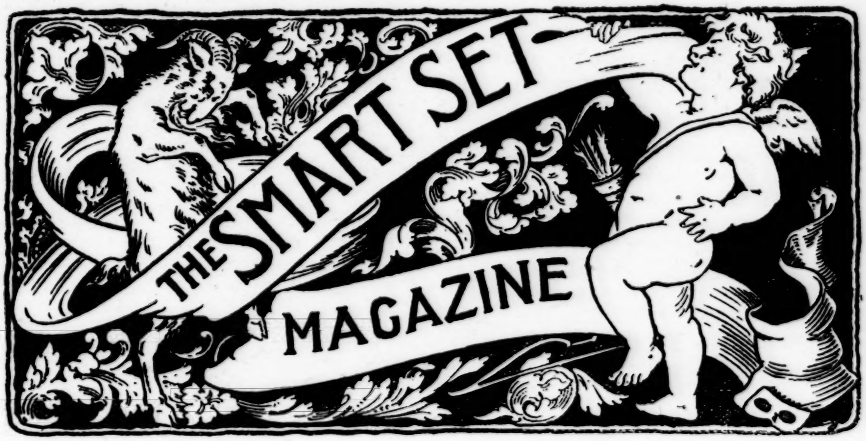

JULIA CONWAY

By L. M. Hussey

CHAPTER I

ALL day, repeating the unvaried cycle of her other days, she stood behind the counter and sold little pieces of cheap embroideries. Women came to her counter and questioned her; they fingered the goods laid out for her to sell; they hesitated; they bought; they went away without buying.

At noon she ate her lunch with the other girls, all congregated in a dim, disordered stock room. Their shrill babble vibrated in her ears like the inconsequent chatter of magpies. They did not notice her abstraction; no one troubled her. And she performed her duties at the counter with a mechanical exactness; there were no complaints. Yet her mind was withdrawn, her thoughts were her own, and since the early morning a thought had played in her mind again and again, like the repeated strokes of a bell.

"I'm getting old," she thought, "I'm getting old! What am I going to do?"

At the beginning of that day she had lived exactly twenty-two years. The fact startled her, as if it were portentous and tragic. She was deeply dissatisfied, deeply concerned. Now on her birthday the obscure smoulder of her discontent flared into the urgency of flame. Women crowded about her counter and she answered them when they questioned her. She had stopped too long with these people, and given too many of her hours to these concerns! Across the aisle she saw another sales-girl smoothing her flamboyant yellow hair with swift little pats of her straightened fingers. A profound revulsion made her hate this trivial perspective, the foreshortened vista, month after month, of that girl patting her bleached yellow hair! Her throat and nose were dry with the hot, close smells of the store, as if she had been inhaling her breath in a perpetual cloud of dust; her ears ached with their response to the unceasing trivial clatter, the cacophonous drum-beat of footsteps, the shrill calls of the sales-girls, the insinuating

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murmur of floorwalkers, the meaningless overtone of customers, speaking. She waited with a mute passion for the closing hour.

At half-past five there was the sudden clamour of concluding the day's business. Now, in the hurry of all the men and girls to ring out, her own patience lost its fervour. She made her preparations to leave with an almost contemptuous deliberation. The dressing room was nearly empty when she went in to wash her hands, straighten her hair, dab powder over her face, set her hat at the proper angle. At the other end of the room a girl standing before the mirror with her shirtwaist removed was perfunctorily mending the shoulder ribbon of her chemise. The garment was badly soiled. She hurried out of the place and approached the time-clock. One of the night-watchmen, standing near, grinned at her. She angrily punched her card and passed through the door to the street.

As she emerged a young man, stepping out from the wall against which he had been lounging, stopped in front of her, took off his hat, smiled.

"Hello, Julia," he said. "I thought you was never coming!"

She was not pleased to see him; she did not smile at him.

"Hello," she said. "What are you doing here?"

"Waiting for you, of course. It's so blame hard to see you these days, I thought I'd stop around and catch you on your way from work."

He returned his hat to his head, setting it a little askew. A lock of his straw coloured hair was pushed down under the brim over his forehead. She looked with disfavour at his big-lipped mouth, his large nose, smooth, as if melted a little, his pallid blue eyes. She did not want to talk to him; she showed him no cordiality. It angered her that he had, in a sense, caught her in ambush.

"What's the matter with you these days, Julie?" he asked.

He had enclosed her unwilling arm in his ample hand and they were walking slowly along the pavement.

"What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean! Every time I call you up at the house you give me some stall. You tell me you have a date or something. Or else you're sick, or somebody else ain't well."

"Jack," she said, "you'd better go on alone if you're going to make yourself as unpleasant as possible. I don't feel like listening to you. I won't, either."

He inclined his head to her, he peered into her face, his voice lost its querulousness and was suddenly pleading.

"Honest, Julie," he said, "I don't want to make you mad. You know I like to see you laugh! But when are you going to let me take you out again? Can't I come and take you out to-night?"

She was about to tell him "no"; a quick contravailing impulse, not immediately fathomed, made her say the opposite.

"Yes, I'll see you to-night," she said. "But I've got to hurry now. Stop at the house sometime around eight. I'll try to be ready."

She was rid of him at last and, standing at the corner waiting for her car, she wondered how she had ever tolerated the little intimacy she had allowed him. A few months before she had let him kiss her occasionally. She remembered his kisses, they had never thrilled her; she was, at the most favourable, indifferent to any of his fondling. But some hardly admitted urge, some vague necessity, some romantic hope, had led her to the experiment of his caresses. And he was now only another factor in her profound discontent.

Well, she knew at any rate why she had consented to see him in the evening. As she thought of it, a momentary surge of pleasure reddened her cheeks, parted her lips a trifle, made her eyes more lustrous. To-night she would tell him, with a

straightforward brutality, even with a delight at hurting him, that he could never see her again. The initial step in her deep purpose of another sort of life! Her car stopped at the corner, she got on, dropped her nickel in the box, and found a seat with a smile.

Now she felt a greater content than she had known all day. In a way, by the chance of this meeting and its eventuation of her quick resolution, she had committed herself to a long contemplated course of action, a series of renunciations and severances, of merciless denials, of unflinching rejections that would wash her clean of the shoddy way her undesired days came and went. She forgot to be angry with the crowd that pushed into the car at every corner; she looked about her with an aloof disdain, with a stirring sense of fine detachment, that armed her, as in a palpable and impervious garment, against the hurt to her spirit of these uncouth, jostling men in the car, the close, unpleasant air, the mutter of harsh voices, the dirt, the shabbiness. She looked about her with her brows lifted, the wraith of a smile curving her lips.

Across the aisle her eyes recorded the face and figure of a man that focussed her faculties to attention. He was dressed well, his manner was assured, he was set off from the others adjacent to him like a single stroke of clean colour on a palette of mixed and indeterminate greys. She observed his smooth white face, his well moulded lips, the straight, quick line of his brows, the dark patches of his hair brushed close about his ears on either side. Her gaze remained upon his face; it was a moment before, with a sudden embarrassment, she realized he was steadfastly looking at her. Then she turned her head quickly and was afraid to look back again.

Glancing obliquely out of the window, she observed that she was near her street. She stood up; she hoped, palpitantly, that he would stand up also and follow her out of the car. But in the corners of her eyes she caught his blurred, immobile figure, still seated.

She got out at her corner with a swift, deep regret; she stood irresolutely in the street watching the car as it withdrew from her, growing smaller along the converging rails. Finally she turned away with an emotion of personal contempt: why had she failed in the simple courage to smile at him? It was his sort, it was this kind of a man, she could find her delight in knowing!

She had several blocks to walk before she reached her home. The district was a medley of the opposed races, the black and the white. Dim, obscure little streets jutted into the main thoroughfares and when you looked down when you perceived a clamorous aspect of dodging swart figures, black faces, great loitering negresses of fabulous bulk, negro children fighting, in dispute, laughing, howling, being chastised. At the next corner, at the next intruding little street, the complexion was changed; white men stood about in groups, talking, their women looked out from the doors of the little houses whilst extremely small children entangled themselves in their skirts, emerging here and there like fantastic animals from the marsupial pouch. Occasionally a flamboyantly costumed girl hurried down the sidewalk and pushed her way into one of the houses. Into all these streets there sifted, like an impalpable begrimed snow, the soot of the factory chimneys, and the sun set behind the soiled buildings in a blurred red.

Finally she turned into her own street, walking slowly, speaking to no one. As she drew near her home she saw her brother loitering on the steps. He edged aside to let her pass him. He was sitting without his hat or coat, in his shirt sleeves, smoking a cigarette.

"Hello," he said.

"Hello," she replied.

She walked up the steps and was about to open the vestibule door.

"Say," he called, "can I see you a minute after supper?"

She turned and looked at him with a manifest contempt.

"Yes, I suppose you can."

He wanted to borrow money; she knew that. Probably he had quit his job again.

CHAPTER II

JULIA closed the vestibule door behind her; a smell of cooking, coming out of the kitchen as a pungent effluvia of pepper, steaming vegetables, rigorous onions, coffee on boil, assailed her like a presence. The hall was dark, a dim hatrack arose directly in front of her, bulging with the amorphous shapes of disorderly headgear, whilst a few feet further on the stairs to the second floor jutted up abruptly, duskly, like niches cut along the slope of a cavernous wall. There was no one in the hall; she parted the hangings at the parlour door: the darkened little room was empty. She took off her hat and hung it negligently on the rack.

Her depressed mood had returned, as if there were something in the air of that house, a malign gas, that affected her spirits like a narcotic. The voice of her sister came out from the kitchen, talking to some one, her mother, no doubt, in a narrative monotony.

She hesitated a moment and then walked through the hall, through the dining room out to the kitchen damp with the vapours of cooking. Her sister was perched on a low, three-cornered stool, her mother, with limp, bedraggled hair, was stirring a pot; they both turned and looked at her without greeting.

"Here," exclaimed her mother finally. "Set the table, one of you. Haven't I anything to do but slave in this kitchen while you two look on?"

Making no comment, Julia walked over to a closet and slowly began to take down the thick dishes, scratched on their surfaces, nicked on their edges, as if they were the survivors of a battle. Her sister languidly disentangled herself from the stool, stretched, yawned, highed, pulled out a drawer and rattled the knives and forks. Burdened with a pile of plates, cups and saucers, Julia went into the dining room, lit the gas, and placed the utensils around the table. She took the knives and forks from her sister and made their distribution.

"Call Harry, call the old man, one of you!" her mother's voice commanded.

The two girls moved simultaneously out into the hall. Julia's sister paused at the stairs; Julia opened the vestibule door to summon her brother.

"Mr. Patterson! Hey, Mr. Patterson! Supper!"

The shrill-pitched voice of the girl ascended to the upper corridor; a thump was heard, the noise of deliberate footsteps; the sisters retreated to the dining room. A moment later Harry, eyeing the food, followed by a disorderly old man, their boarder, entered the room.

They all sat down at the table and reached for the dishes. The old man, Patterson, plunged into an irrelevant backwoods anecdote; he talked steadily, monotonously, between bites; he peered at his plate through his rimmed spectacles; his white beard flapped on his chin with the movements of his jaws like a slack sail. The patriarch came to the end of his tale; he chuckled alone at the denouement:

"And Potter said: 'I won't pay you nothin'. I'd rather give my money to a learnt man!'"

Nobody gave him any attention; his cackle of pleasure merged into the metallic click of knives and forks, the guttural sound of deglutition, the sibilant hiss of sipped coffee. There was a period of morose silence; they gave themselves up, like devotees, to the urgency of taking food. Julia, her eyes downcast, was glad of the silence. She hurried through her meal with an immense desire to get away from the

table; she ate without any sense of savour, from a sheer physical necessity. At last her sister began to speak of a piece of dress goods she had seen in a store, her mother entered into the subject; between these two a harsh, disputative talk broke out like a sudden conflagration.

There was no ceremony of departure at that table. When Julia had finished, she pushed back her chair and stood up. Saying nothing, she left the room. Her brother followed her quickly and detained her in the hall. It was as she supposed: he needed money. She saw that he was prepared to be aggressive, to be endlessly argumentative; she surprised him by yielding at once. She gave him the money he wanted with a tired acquiescence, with a sense of weariness, as a part of her routine, one of the regular acts of her undesired days.

She went up to her room, the room she shared with her sister. She was used to its cubic smallness; she manœuvred the passage between their bureau and their bed, seating herself in front of a dingy little dressing table. Already it was dusk outside. The one side of her face received a pallid light from the window, the other was dim, in a half-purple shadow. She sat aimlessly for a moment and her indistinct counterfeit looked at her from the glass of the mirror.

Presently she struck a match, stood up and lit the gas that jutted out from the wall on a short, discoloured bracket. The flame flickered in the draught from the window, the yellow light cheapened the cheap furnishings of the room. Julia looked at a little clock, a celluloid imitation of ivory, that loudly ticked off the seconds from the bureau. Her engagement for the evening was in her mind, and she saw that she had very little time in which to dress.

She walked over to the closet, opened the door, looked in at the close-hung dresses falling limply from their hooks. She did not remove any. She stood in front of the opened door in a curious irresolution, conscious of the necessity for hurry, but nevertheless without action. She heard someone coming up the stairs. In another second her sister joined her in the room.

"Are you going out, Julie?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"I don't know. Jack's coming."

There was a brief, silent interval.

"Julie?"

"Well?"

"Do you like him?"

Julia turned around, looked at her sister. The girl was leaning against the back of the bed, her arms spread out, her head thrown backward, her lips parted in an inquiring smile. Her face, pallid with the frailty of a forced maturing, had an indefinite, an uncertain prettiness. In a shadowy way she resembled Julia, a meagre duplicate, a Julia ill-nourished.

"Do I like him? What do you mean, Bertha?"

She did not press the specific nature of her query, she modified it, she made it general.

"Did you ever go with a fella you really *liked?* You know what I mean, kid."

Julia laughed a little, she shrugged her shoulders.

"I met a new fella last night," said Bertha. "You ought've seen him. Maybe I'll bring him around here sometime."

Her eyes brightened, she smiled with an ardent delight. She tapped her spread-out fingers on the rail of the bed.

"Where did you meet him?" asked Julia.

"Oh, in the park. I saw him and I gave him a smile. He spoke to me right away. We sat down on a bench; he wanted to get fresh but I managed him. I know how to take care of myself. Afterwards I let him kiss me a little. Julie, do you like to be kissed very much?"

"You better look out who you let kiss you."

"Oh, don't worry about me. I felt

funny when he kissed me. Kind of like I couldn't breathe easy. Wouldn't it be funny if he'd be the fella I'd marry? You think I'm too young to marry, don't you? You better look out and get some John yourself. Let me tell you, I wouldn't take a chance as long as you, Julie!"

Her mother called below; grinning with delight, Bertha ran out of the room. A swirl of air from her skirts agitated the dresses hanging in the open closet. Julia looked after her, faintly smiling.

She was a naïve child; Julia envied the effervescent sparkle of her spirits. She was young, but no doubt she would get married soon—anytime; six months, within a year. She would become married with a full abandon, with a joyousness.

"She is sure of herself," thought Julia. "And I am so very different."

Julia began to dress for the evening. She let down her hair, it dropped about her shoulders exuberantly, in the waves that were natural to it. She seated herself before the mirror, meticulously arranging the coils in the fashion she desired. Her fingers played about her hair with a white deftness. Her bare arms, yellowed a little in the gas light, shifted their gracile contours as she moved them. Innumerable, slender hairpins disappeared in her hair. Presently it was piled up on her head in a manner that lengthened her face a little, accentuated the slender column of her neck, the round smallness of her throat, giving her an aspect that was gracious and a little fragile. She dropped her hands and looked at her face in the mirror.

It was a face that had loveliness; her eyes gave her that assurance. The eyebrows cut two faintly arched lines, and the eyes below glinted with commingled lights, browns and sudden greens, like the scintillant reflections of concealed emeralds. The nose was straight, bridged rather sharply and worked with fineness at the nostrils. Her lips were unexpectedly full; they had not the ease of smiles, but seemed to hesitate at the corners, in an almost tense indecision. Her skin's texture had a rare softness, like the petal of a white rose. Her face was without decisive colouring. Above it her brown hair, with its subtly suggested bronze, was heaped in sudden plenty. Looking at her reflected face, she knew a relieving sense of pleasure, even a brief content.

She stood up and drew on a dress stamped with pink flowers that made her instantly younger, girlish, almost blithe. It was cut into a low V at the neck; around her throat she fastened a string of imitation pearls that rose and fell in a faint rhythm with her breathing.

She was standing at the mirror again, straightening her dress, when Bertha thrust her head in the door with the suddenness of an apparition.

"Your Jack's here!"

She hurled the words across the room in a vibrant whisper, melodramatically, like a conspirator.

Julia turned quickly, staring, surprised. She had quite forgotten Jack! She had forgotten the reason for all her preparation: the flowered dress, the elaborately fixed hair, the string of pearls. It seemed impossible now that she had asked the fellow to call. She did not want to see him; she did not want him near her. Bertha's head remained in the door, a face and neck without a body, suggesting a humorous Medusa, grinning, snapping her eyes.

As if suddenly weary, enervated by the cumulative weight of long travail, Julia sank into the little chair before the mirror.

"Bertha," she said, "I don't want to see him. Tell him I can't see him!"

The eyes of the head in the door rounded and expanded like enlarging discs.

"What!"

"I say, tell him I can't see him. Send him away!"

"Girl, you're crazy!"

"Send him away! Tell him anything. Tell him I'm sick; that will do. Yes,

go down and tell him I've got a sick headache."

The incredulous face remained a moment longer, pushed through the partly opened door; then it withdrew with a lingering stare that seemed to remain a moment as an imponderable presence, after the eyes that had given it expression were taken away. The door closed. She was alone again.

Her hands were dropped in her lap like two pallid flowers, her shoulders flexed in a drooping curve, her eyes looked downward. After a time she turned in her chair until she again faced the shabby little dressing table. She did not look up at the mirror. Her glance sought the picture of a woman poised slantwise on the table, framed in an oval of celluloid-ivory, that matched the tireless clock on the bureau. It was a quaint portrait, the photographic reproduction of an old and indifferent painting. Julia took it in her hands and looked at it with earnest scrutiny.

This was the valorous woman that had lived in her family more than a hundred years before, the grandmother of her own grandmother. What an old family it was! How incredibly degraded, how insensible to its past fineness!

As she had a hundred times before, Julia studied the curious photograph, examined the uplifted face, the eyes that looked out bravely, the chin with a gracious and courageous curve. She tried to see alive the woman of whom only a likeness survived, and a memory; only her memory, surely neither her brother or sister recalled it now. Often the day returned to her when her father had told the story. That was years ago; he was dead and the story of his family with him, save for her single recollection.

CHAPTER III

THIS woman, strangely aloof now in the little picture, had once done a simple, courageous thing. She had done it unreasoningly, from the urge of a sheer unbending spirit. The King's troops had won the skirmish in Germantown, Washington had withdrawn, and the British officers were being billeted upon the better families. And this woman had refused—foolishly, irrationally, magnificently—the order upon her house. Somewhere, in the obscure and inadequate armies of the states, her husband added his arm to the forces of the colonies. Perhaps his sacrifice and his spirit supplied her determination. Her own courage sufficed for the act. She stood in the door of her home with a smooth-bore musket in her hands, a muzzle-loader rammed down with slugs, and she defied the enemy to enter. There could have been nothing wavering in her countenance, in her poise, in her determined aspect, for no frontal assault was attempted. Of course they overcame her finally, they managed an entrance through the rear of the house and disarmed her as by an ambush, but that was the fortune of the odds against her.

Beatrice Conway! Julia remembered her father as he told the story, and she recalled the air of melancholy that seemed to hang like a suspended veil over his recital. She believed now that he recognized himself as a failure, that the history of his people, transmitted orally from one generation to another, accentuated his knowledge. But surely he must have had his brave designs, his time purposes, his precious aims, when he was young. Then why had he married her mother! What allure had he found in her?

Below she heard the front door close sharply; a loose globe on the gas-bracket vibrated with the shock; she put back the picture on the dressing table. Jack must have gone out.

She listened a moment with a countenance tense and alert; she felt a confirmation in the succeeding quiet. Now she was done with him; she had made the first break, the first severance! All her immense urge, her passionate desire, to get away from everyone she

knew, from all the hated concerns that seized as by theft her hours and her days, filled her senses in an overmastering emotion. She stood up swiftly, her eyes widened, the luminous white of her cheeks splotched with red colour, as if a flame had touched them. In a collected, instant picture she saw all the persons of her present concern, her mother, her sister, her brother, the families on the street, the men and women with whom she worked, the young obscure men driven to her by the appeal of sex. They were as if before her grouped together, blended one into the other, an undesired presence. She spoke to them aloud in a passionate whisper.

"I'm going away from all of you! I don't want to see you again! I never want to see one of you again!"

She walked to the closet once more and taking a hat down from the shelf, fastened it to her head with long hatpins that she thrust into her hair with savage swiftness. She turned out the gas and left the room, without a design or a definite purpose, with only an intolerable wish to leave the house with an impulse beyond denial.

She went down the stairs swiftly, and as she passed into the vestibule Bertha appeared, a sudden materialization in the dining-room door, and called something after her. But Julia did not wait to hear her; she closed the door behind her; she hurried out to the street.

The night was warm and every doorstep was crowded with coatless men, with women inadequately dressed, with an occasional girl cheaply immaculate. The spawn of these people, children begrimed and hot, ran about in the streets in an aimless and unending activity.

Julia hurried along the sidewalk, she hurried to leave behind her the families on the steps, the children in their turmoil, the hot, still air, the commingled smells of the houses that passed out from the dusk squares of their opened windows. She turned into the main street; the stores were lighted and their cheap goods, arranged to attract by transparent devices, lay under electric bulbs like the meaningless litter of some futile and monstrous industry. She passed with ner eyes straight in front.

As she approached the next corner she saw the sidewalk crowded to the curb by a small, swaying mob, expanding and contracting as one body, like a fabulous and grotesque amœba. She came nearer; men were yelling, their cries vibrated harshly in the heated air; through an occasional opening in the crowd she caught a dark glimpse of two men fighting. Abruptly she crossed the street. Now the crowd was plainer, the two figures of the fighters revealed themselves as a white man and a negro. Just as she passed, another pair struck out at each other on the edge of the mob, and instantly they were the nucleus of a second press of yelling men. From the side streets a trickle of running boys and men contributed to the mob.

It occurred to her then, vaguely, as a corollary to her discontent, that serious trouble might arise in this augmenting crowd: the mixture of black and white in this neighbourhood was unstable and sensitive; riots were not uncommon. She was glad to reach the corner and get on a street car. Her destination was still undetermined; she rode with the goalless desire of escape.

Nobody in the car interested her. Seated next the window, she rested her chin in her palm and stared out at the street. Her eyes were unobservant and the squares streamed slowly behind her like an obscure phantasmagoria, a dissolving view of uncertain streets dimly peopled. The neighbourhoods merged into each other, sometimes suddenly: a mean row of buildings was followed by a gracious square, houses irretrievably smudged and soiled were replaced by clean, straight façades and even the surrounding air seemed clarified.

Finally she was tired of riding; she stood up and left the car. It passed and she paused on the corner looking about.

Opposite was the park, a breeze blew out from the trees and she was glad that she had come here. She crossed and went in on a gravel walk. Just within the entrance, behind a clump of shrubby sassafras, a man and woman sat close together on a bench, and the murmur of their low voices, unheeding her, came into her ears as she passed them. She felt lonely then and melancholy.

She saw an empty bench and seated herself. Its back was pushed against the trunk of a tree, and she was in the shadow of the leaves, a slender quiet figure in the dusk. In front of her the trees opened up into a slope of closely cut grass that had an emerald luminousness in the artificial moons of tall arc lights. The clamour of the streets entered the park as an endless sound subdued, like the murmur of a near other world. Across the grass-slope, near the walk, the shadow of a tree was darkly laid like a fantastic, sable figure, lying there. Julia looked down at the ground, she dug her heel into the gravel and she yielded to the longing of inconsecutive and half-apprehended desires.

She looked up at the sound of someone approaching. A man appeared around the turn, walking slowly, tapping a light cane on the loose stones. He saw her and as he drew nearer she perceived that he was looking at her. She watched his approach with an undeviating gaze. After a second she knew that he pleased her, the easy little swing of his cane, the dim whiteness of his face, the poise of his strolling figure.

As if shocked into awareness by a sudden stimulation, her faculties were alert, her sight more penetrating, her ears cognizant of new sounds. For an instant it seemed to her that she recognized the man who drew near, that he must be someone she knew. Immediately she thought of the man she had seen earlier in the evening in the car. A second, and it seemed that this one was the same. But he was closer now: his was another face.

She looked up at him; their eyes met. He paused; he stood still. She knew that she wanted to know him. There were subtly apparent in his dusk outlines those indefinite qualities that touched her desire. She wondered a second at her courage in so steadfastly meeting his eyes. She had an inner surprise that her lips were smiling.

"Good-evening," he said.

"Good-evening," she murmured.

He sat down beside her. She felt by the sharpened perceptions of her augmented sensitiveness the slight bending of the bench under his added weight. She turned her face to him. He was scrutinizing her with a half smile, his eyes lighted with an evident pleasure in her features. Her countenance surprised him as if, in the first indistinct moment of seeing her, when only the invitation of her uplifted face, and not the closer knowledge of it, had drawn him to the bench, he had expected features of another and more common quality. She gave him her smile, but the lips that expressed it seemed in a fascinating way without the habit of smiling and even now parted, curved, they hinted an inseparable melancholy, as if this were an imponderable tissue of their substance.

His scrutiny of her gave her no embarrassment; she forgot herself in the interest of searching his face. No, he was not the man she had seen in the car, nor even, in a strict sense, was there a resemblance. Nevertheless, she thought of the two in conjunction, with a quick assurance of their similarity. She liked him; she was glad he was sitting near her.

She sought to know his face in a comprehensive instant, to make it a part of her immediate pleasure, as if her mind must have a sudden, adequate image of him before he could function in her thoughts. In that swift picture she recorded the dark colour of his eyes, the contour of his cheek and chin, the shape his lips took when they spoke to her. She waited for him to speak, leaning a trifle toward him, naïve in her eagerness.

CHAPTER IV

"WHAT are you doing here?" he asked.

She was about to answer him; he interrupted her.

"It was foolish of me to ask that, wasn't it?" he said. "I don't doubt you may have come to the park for the same reason I did; perhaps you were tired or a little out of sorts and wanted to be somewhere in the quiet for a while. Are you sorry I sat down? Would you rather I went on?"

His consideration did not surprise her; it was in consonance with her assumptive knowledge of him. Nevertheless, a warm delight thrilled her in the actual bearing out of her assurance.

"No," she said, "I want to talk to you."

"I'm glad. I didn't expect to meet anyone here to-night; that is, make any acquaintance. I wasn't thinking of anything particularly, just walking along the path, and I saw you looking at me. You . . . you appealed to me. . . ."

His last hesitant sentence received her smile that now contained the quality of tenderness. She knew that he would have passed her seated on the bench and gone on with never a word to her if the sudden courage of her lips had not drawn him to her. Yet she liked his assumption otherwise, the assumption of his own volition, the pleasant false postulate of his masculine aggressiveness.

"Do you know," he went on, "I don't as a rule like to meet a girl this way. You don't know anything about each other; don't you think it's hard sometimes, to hit on a common ground for conversation?"

Her eyes dwelt upon his face, and more accustomed to the shadows of the trees, she began to apprehend their colour.

"But it's interesting, too, isn't it?" she asked. "To find out about each other! To make discoveries!"

They began to ask questions, but in all the answers she was required to make she maintained a scrupulous reserve, a fastidious caution. She did not want him to know where she lived, how she spent her days, or even that she worked at all. She was evasive, or silent.

He was frank with his own answers; she learned many of the details of his life. She was pleased to discover that he was a business man, for that added a solidity to his character which, in the practitioner of some more romantic occupation, she would have found lacking. Among his confessions he said that he lived alone. At once her emotion included a maternal pity.

"Who keeps your apartment straight for you?" she asked.

"There's a woman in the building who attends to that."

"It must be in a dreadful state!" she exlaimed.

"No—she's not so bad. I manage to get along."

"Poor man!" she exclaimed. "I know it's all upside down. You must be lonely too!"

Her concluding words aroused an emotion, a new apprehension. Her face was near him, his widened eyes were eager in meeting her own. For the first time an emptiness, a fundamental lack, appeared in the aspect of his life. His feeling was that of missing something, of knowing the deprivation of a certain graciousness, a colour, a rhythm, a perfume, a sweetness, that now in this illuminated moment he saw was his deep desire.

He put out his hand and his fingers, touched the arm of the girl near him, pressed upon the sheer sleeve of her flowered dress and felt the communicated warmth of her skin beneath it. She remained motionless, the quiet of the park was complete, the shadow of the trees moved faintly on the slope of the green grass, like a fantastic pendulum, animated by an unfelt wind. Then she withdrew her arm and suddenly she stood up.

"I must go," she said.

He arose too; he expostulated.

"Why?" he asked. "What is the matter?"

"Nothing! I had no idea of staying here so long!"

"You must let me see you home, then."

"No! Not to-night! I can't!"

"But you're going to let me see you again!"

"Yes, I want you to! I'll call you on the telephone. Write your number on your card—can you see to do that here?"

He removed a cardboard slip from his pocket and wrote down the number on it; she took it and dropped it into her handbag. He secured her hand, held it a moment, pressing her smooth skin against his palm.

"Will you really call me up?" he asked. "I want to know you better. I should feel immensely disappointed if I could never see you again."

"I'll keep my word," she said.

He watched her as she walked away along the path; she knew that he was standing looking at her. She hurried, her heart pulsing rapidly and she felt that she had averted a real catastrophe. He must never come to her home; he must never see one of her family! All her hateful associations were doubly now the objects of her utter discontent. Whatever charm she could make him know in her required a setting that would not chill his sense of her allure.

For months she had schemed a break with everyone and now she must make it, within a day, within a week, if ever she wished to see him again. And she wanted this: to watch his face, to study his eyes, to see his slender hands that gestured faintly to his thought, and to know her content that had been instant in the indefinable flavour, in the caressing quality, in the evident charm of his personality.

She came to the corner, saw her car approaching; she got on and found a seat mechanically, seeing no one, thinking solely of her encounter in the park.

CHAPTER V

When she reached her street her thoughts were wrenched from their desire by a dramatic turmoil, an immense excitement, that afterward formed her final remembered picture of these people and these streets among which she had lived for so many unwilling years. Afterward she recalled in a conglomerate picture, a picture tinctured with fear and a profound contempt, the shouts, the screams, the mad yells; the rush of a body of police with drawn clubs; the hoofbeats of the mounted police riding into the mob; the loud reports of firearms thrust over the human clamour with a sharp, sinister penetration; the frantic figures of women running along the pavements, children hugged in their arms, their hair unloosened and straggling over their faces; the sight of a negro she saw in the gutter, sprawled unconscious, with the welt from a heavy weapon dark and swelled over his eye. The night became in her memory a dramatic representation of all her other nights there, the just estimate of them, their brutal osmazome, their malignant flavour.

A policeman stopped her as she stepped from the car.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

She looked up at him, astonished, speechless.

"Do you live here?" he asked.

"Yes. . . ."

"Where?"

She told him her street.

"I'll take you there," he said. "Go in the house and stay in. Don't come out again to-night. We've got our orders: we're going to rope these streets off and arrest everyone that's out without a reason."

She did not need to ask the trouble. It was apparent to her already, and she remembered the fight earlier in the evening, that must have been the beginning. Another race-riot! Senseless violence, brute, unreasoning rage!

A platoon of mounted men galloped

around the corner, with long riot-sticks in their hands. Two squares below a swaying mob, an indescribable surge of yelling men seemed to hold like a barrier of insuperable bodies before their swift approach.

The policeman held her arm, his fingers pressing painfully into her flesh.

They stood on the corner watching. She drew in her breath, retaining it in a second of supreme excitement. For a lurid instant she saw in her imagination the horses rearing upon inextricable struggling bodies, she witnessed the frenzied blows of steel-rimmed hoofs upon the faces and forms of screaming men. They swayed and surged, they bent forward and backward like a chain of linked and inseparable figures, like a doomed chain sinisterly transfixed. The dust of the unclean streets rose behind the horses. And then the chain parted, it dissolved in the middle before the clattering hoofs, it beat back upon the sidewalks, it lengthened and spread out, and men darted away from it and ran.

A shot was fired from somewhere in the crowd and with an appalling suddenness one of the uniformed men fell out of his saddle.

In another instant the horses were riding up over the curbs and the long clubs held in upraised arms, beat down in to the mob.

The man holding her arm jerked her forward.

"Hurry along now!" he commanded. "I think we can get through."

He turned her with him at the first street.

The houses were dark, the windows were shut; white faces, pressed against the glass, looked out like ghouls restrained in prisons of enchantment. Half way down the block a man ran, ran from nothing, blindly and insanely as if pursued by whispering and invisible devils.

The policeman pulled her along mercilessly, saying nothing, and she ran at his side to keep up with him. Her spirit felt an immense ignominy, an overwhelming horror; she hated the man who was hurrying her from violence.

They turned again, they reached her street. It was like the other, unpeopled, silent. He took her to her door.

"Hurry in there now," he said.

She fitted her key into the lock, she turned the knob, she entered the vestibule and closed the door behind her, and her mother and sister rushed out of the parlour and fell upon her with an hysterical babble.

"Yes, I'm all right," she said. "Let me get up to my room. It sickens me! I don't want to hear anything about it!"

She ran up the stairs and shut the hall door. She lighted the gas and dropped into a chair, her face supported in her hands. Against her palms she could feel the excited throb in her temples.

All at once she was planning. She would go to-morrow; she would go finally and forever! She knew how much money she had—five years' secret savings—not quite two hundred and fifty dollars. She would never go back to the store, never see the yellow-haired girl patting down her hateful hair, never eat another lunch in the clamorous stockroom, never tell a price to another fingering woman. Something would happen before all the money was spent, something would come to her. She gave herself over to chance, to fortune, to the mercies of her destiny with an abandon that stirred her, that thrilled her with a physical tremor, like a fanatic delivering himself to the will of an inscrutable and voiceless God.

She raised her head and looked into the mirror. Her face was white, the colour gone out of it utterly; her hair was loosened at one side and a strand hung suspended against her cheek. Her gaze dropped to the table and she saw the little framed oval and the eyes of Beatrice Conway, remote and calm in a hundred years of death, looked into her own. They calmed her, they quieted her like the touch of a potent

beloved hand. Suddenly she was assured, suddenly her courage was adequate to her determination. Her cheeks coloured as if a dust of carmine had been blown upon them, her eyes were wider with their emerald glints. She took the portrait in her hand and pressed her lips, the tip of her light lips, upon the pictured face. She leaned back in her chair, the gas light wavered and flickered, the vague presence of lovely dreams seemed all about her.

She thought of him again: the man who had sat with her in the park. She remembered his touch on her arm, the touch that had frightened her with the thrill of it.

Reaching out hastily, she secured her handbag and undid the clasp and sought with eager fingers for his card. She did not even know his name! Her fingers closed over the thin rectangle and she held it under the light. She read it: Walter Hastings. Her lips shaped the two words, they said the name aloud, they repeated it like a charm, like a precious enchantment, like the sesame of delightful treasure.

She went over to the window and leaned out. The night had become cooler, there were stars in the sky. Coming up to her like a malign discordance she heard the sound of yelling in a distant street. It passed into her ears unheeded. For a long time she looked out of the window at the dark roofs of the houses and at the inaccessible stars.

Finally her eyes grew heavy and she turned from the window; she began to loosen her skirt. When her sister came to bed she was asleep.

CHAPTER VI

She awoke with the persistent scream of her mother's voice, calling to her from below. She yelled back; the calling ceased. Her door opened and Bertha came in from the bathroom. She was brutally rubbing a towel over her face, stamping her feet, shaking her head like a poodle. In the morning Bertha was always sullen. Her eyes were red, the tip of her nose was red, her hair hung in lank strings about her face. The exuberance of her spirits seemed a quality gone forever with the departed yesterday. Now she stooped in front of the mirror and began combing out her tangled hair.

"Oh, damn!" she said. "Damn this everlasting getting up in the morning."

Julia stirred and sat up in her bed. The girl at the mirror stared at her a second with her morning's animosity.

"Mom screeched around here a couple of hours to wake up this morning. You better get up," she snarled.

Julia made her no retort; she dressed in silence. Presently she went below and ate her breakfast with the rest. They were talking about the riot; they said the streets were quiet now. She did not listen to them, she closed her ears to the clatter of their tongues. At the customary hour she left the house: no one had a suspicion of her purpose. Outside, on the pavement, she hurried for a few steps, a reflex, a long morning habit; suddenly she stopped, walked with an exquisite languor, a deliberate slowness: she was never going to work again!

In an occasional broken window, an overturned sign, a store door burst open, she saw the evidence of the night's violence. The streets were full of uniformed men; they stared at her as she passed. Already the experience was remote; the riot was a reminiscence from a chamber of old and useless memories. From these circumstances she was detached and their vitality no longer oppressed her. In a few minutes she came to the car tracks and took the first trolley into town. She tolerated the jostling crowd because it was no longer her morning necessity to be with them.

When the car reached the business section she got out. To walk slowly when everyone else was hurrying was a delight that made itself known in a physical pleasure. She strolled, look-

ing into the store windows, and the crowd swayed past her. Presently she bought a newspaper from a corner newsboy, and folding it under her arm, turned in at the first department store.

She went up in the elevator to the women's room and sat down in one of the comfortable large chairs. There was no one else in the room save an attendant in a white cap. She opened her newspaper and turned to the advertising section; she searched the list of furnished rooms. Taking a stubby pencil out of her purse she made small check marks beside the likely addresses.

She finished this task and leaned back in her chair, her hands in her lap, her head pressed against the padded leather.

Women began to come into the room: the morning shoppers. She watched them and appraised them; to be one with them in their leisure, to be freed of the hourly necessity of serving them sufficed for her immediate content, stirred her and warmed her, like the gratification of a forbidden emotion.

After a time she got up and left the resting room; she walked through the store already full of purchasers, acutely aware of the salesgirls behind their rectangular counters, acutely conscious of her happy separation from them. Finally she stepped into a telephone booth and began to call the numbers she had checked in the newspaper.

It was finally necessary to visit two or three of the more promising locations. She went to one; the woman in charge of the place displeased her; she decided against it. She bought herself a small lunch and visited her second prospect. The street was in the northern section of the city, the houses were old and somehow gracious, the locality was quiet.

She found an agreeable front room communicating with a small bath; it gave her a view upon the calm street. A pleasant and discreet little woman exhibited the apartment to her. There was a bed with a tall wooden back, carved into wooden arabesques, a big chair heaped with cushions near the window, a dressing table with a generous mirror at the other side of the room, another mirror, full-length and pleasing, set into the panels of the closet. She asked the price; she reflected a moment; she agreed to it. A sudden reckoning up of her resources occupied her mind.

"If I manage," she thought, "I'll be safe for two or three months. Something is certain to happen by then!"

"Can I come in to-day?" she asked.

"Yes, certainly! Of course!"

She paid a week's rent in advance, she looked out of the window a second at the street that pleased her and then smiled at the little woman holding the money in her hand.

The woman spoke to her a moment, obsequious small commonplaces, and then left her alone in her room.

Julia stood near the door smiling. She experienced a sense of profound security and a deep assurance, as if by a miracle of oracular revealment her eyes had witnessed the golden certainty of her future. The act of securing these quarters was momentous in its simplicity.

Motionless, near the door, smiling like an idol dedicated to inscrutable joys, Julia thought of Walter Hastings. She envisaged him complete in that embodiment consonant with her exulting mood. She saw him as in the revealing shadows of night, with his dark eyes looking at her face, his voice speaking to her with the quiet of a thrilling restraint, his hand touching her arm in a second of prophetic intimacy. Now she could see him again; now she was assured of knowing him!

She looked about the room once more and then, opening the door, went out softly. Downstairs the little woman said good-bye to her in her trivial and agreeable voice. Out on the street Julia's mind became wholly practical: she thought of the arrangements she must make within a few hours. There would be no one home now; all the members of her family were at work. If she hurried, she knew she could get away without encountering any of

them. She hurried to the corner and took the street car.

When she reached home she went up to her room and began to pack her things into a small, flat trunk. She had already engaged an expressman whose ring at the bell was momentarily anticipated. From the opened closet she disentangled her dresses from Bertha's and hurriedly laid them in the trunk. She stripped the shoddy dressing table of those things strictly hers, her comb and brush, a cheap manicuring set, a box of face powder, a little flat cake of rouge, a small jar of vanishing cream. On top of everything she put the picture of Beatrice Conway, calm as always in her remote and distant courage.

To-day Julia held the portrait in her hands with a new emotion: in a measure she felt worthy of its traditions. She seemed to have done some brave, fine thing herself, some deed, more of the spirit than of physical enactment, that brought her closer to the woman of the story, that renewed, in a fresh embodiment, the lustre of her courage.

As she closed down the lid of the trunk she heard the bell ring; it was the expressman. She let him in, and he carried out the box and drove away with it. She sat down at the table with a pencil in her hand and pondered the necessity of writing a note to her mother.

She tapped the pencil on a sheet of white paper creating a little scrawl of thatched lines. It seemed necessary to leave some word. Otherwise there might be inquiries, a hue and cry.

At last she began to write, but she addressed her note to Bertha. She told her that she had gone, that she was tired of living there, that it was useless to make any effort toward her return. She made her words terse, and a quality of bitterness was written into them like the shadow of a second and more fundamental meaning.

She left the sheet with the pencil beside it lying on top of the table. She went out of the house without turning for a last look behind her.

CHAPTER VII

It was late in the afternoon when Julia reached her new quarters. She found her trunk already delivered; she spent half an hour distributing her clothes in the closet behind the tall mirror. Then, with a certain timidity, she went downstairs to use the telephone. She had his card in her hand with the number he had written on it. She took off the receiver and gave the number to the operator.

A girl's voice answered her. She asked for Mr. Hastings.

Presently she heard him speaking, she recognized the character of his voice, it did not surprise her that the sound seemed that of a profound intimacy, a colour of tone to which her ears had long responded.

She smiled as she spoke to him; she leaned closer to the mouthpiece; her eyes were expectant.

"Do you know who this is?" she asked.

"Who is it?" he questioned.

"This is Julia; have you forgotten me so soon?"

"You kept your promise!" he exclaimed. "I'm glad!"

"Did you expect me to call to-day?"

"I hoped you would. After you had gone last night I sat down on the bench and thought how foolish I'd been to let you go the way you did—I mean, without any notion on my part where I could reach you. Why wouldn't you let me take you home?"

"Then you really felt you wanted to see me again?"

"Certainly! Of course I did! When may I see you? May I see you to-night? Will you take dinner with me? Do that, Julia; I'll meet you anywhere you say."

His voice revealed his eagerness to her and stirred her with delight as if it were a long desired gift. Nothing could be closer to her wishes than his proposal. At once she told him she would see him.

"Where shall I meet you then?" he asked. "Anywhere you say! I can call for you in my car, if you like."

"Do that!" she acquiesced.

And then she gave him her new address and set a time.

They talked a moment more before she returned the receiver on its hook.

For a few seconds, standing motionless with the instrument held loosely in her hand, she gave over all her faculties of apprehension to the emotions of the moment. They were defined clearly in no respect; she had, largely, a sense of warmth, a tingling in her finger tips, a glow over her responding body as if, coming out of a bitter cold, she had found the caressing flames of an open fire.

Finally she put the telephone back on the table. Looking about her for an undecided instant, she turned swiftly toward the stairs. She ran up the steps buoyantly.

Entering her room, she realized that there was very little time in which to dress. It was growng dusk, and she turned the button of the electric light.

For some moments her mind was concerned with the clothes she would wear; none she possessed seemed adequate to the occasion. She saw the physical fact, simple in itself, of going out to dinner against a background of enticing and scarcely discerned significances. The coming of this man, her dining with him, the food they would eat, the words they would say, were, she knew, immeasurably greater than the bald prospect of their enactment; the foreseen events in pure fact were engauded before her eyes in a symbolic representation. This evening she was as one stepping across a threshold from a room of soiled and trivial things into a chamber of magnificence, complex in its accoutrements, intricately proportioned, filled with long desired objects for the eyes' immediate seeing. Despite what she knew was no more than a very ordinary enterprise, the prospect of the coming hours garmented themselves in the vestments of a gallant adventure, an adventure that aroused her imagination like the high clear call of a trumpet and touched her mind to the vibrations of dreams. She was happy; she was aboundingly expectant.

The bell rang and she hurried to the window. A car was waiting outside, trembling from the pulsings of its motor, as if it had a beating heart. She knew that he was at the door.

Turning from the window, she took a step toward her door and stood there motionless, slim and erect, poised silently like a fair and fabulous statue, just touched to life in that instant by a necromantic hand. The door of her room opened and the little woman of the house disclosed herself.

"There's a gentleman waiting below," she said.

Julia smiled at her with the graciousness of a queen.

"Thank you," she said. "Will you tell him I'll be down in a few moments?"

She was ready to go at that instant, and her impulse was to run to him with the suddenness and naïveté of a child. Yet she restrained herself with an instinctive feminine artistry sensing the truth that she must not reveal her eagerness. She walked to the dressing table and appraised her face in the mirror. She was conscious of the new colour in her cheeks, the fresh glow in her eyes; she did not mistrust her charm; she knew that she was lovely.

Finally she walked to the door and passed out into the hall. She descended the stairs slowly, paused a second at the portieres that screened the parlour, and, parting them at last, entered with a smile. He was seated near the window. He stood up at once and returned her smile with his own.

There was a moment of restraint, of hesitation. Then, in the consciousness of her allure, seen in the pleasure of his eyes, she laughed a little. She put her hand into his.

"We don't know what to say to each other, do we?" she asked. "That's because we don't really know each other—not so much. Isn't that true? . . . I

have been thinking about you a great deal since—"

"Since last night?"

"It was only last night, wasn't it? Why does the time seem longer?"

"It seems longer to me, too. When I came in here to-night I had the double sensation of something new and at the same time of something old—and pleasant. . . ."

She passed her pleased eyes over his slender, tall figure, and rested them upon his lips with their almost hesitant, diffident smile. She laughed quietly.

"It's because you knew me two or three thousand years ago, in Rome or Greece or Egypt—isn't that possible? What were you like then?"

He laughed a little and did not seem to understand her entirely. He glanced toward the door.

"Where shall we go?" he asked. "I'll take you any place you say. My car is outside."

"You choose," she said.

Together they left the room and she took his arm as they descended the steps of the house. She had experienced a swift emotion of intimacy with her companion that gave her senses the happiness of content. Perhaps he did not pique and stir her as she had imagined he would; her feelings were of another order: quiet, close, tender. This was better. She was, after all, a little tired, aware of a certain flexion of her spirits, and his nearness soothed her, like comforting words. They approached the car and he helped her into the seat beside his own.

They drove away and she began to question him.

"Tell me," she said, "what did you think of me? What did you think of me last night? What sort of a woman did you imagine me to be?"

"The sort of a woman you are," he said.

"What sort of a woman am I?"

"You are unusual."

"Why?"

"You're different from the women I know."

She laughed.

"You don't know what to say, do you? Really, you don't know anything about me; you have everything to find out!"

He turned his face to her a second with an eager light in his dark eyes. Within herself she smiled with resolve. He would never know all about her; she would keep always a mystery and an aloofness for him; she would preserve, like a hidden gem, a strangeness for his consciousness, for she knew that to lack mystery was to lack allure.

For a moment she was silent, watching his profile as he drove the car.

"Do you know," she said at last, "there was something that pleased me about you last night!"

"Will you tell me?"

"Yes; I was glad and I liked you better because . . . because you didn't try to kiss me."

He looked at her, surprised; she thought he coloured a little.

"Why?"

"Because it made you seem more like the person I imagined you to be."

"Which is the worse?" he asked. "Kissing you, or just wanting to?"

She touched his arm, she let her fingers linger on his sleeve.

"I'm glad you wanted to," she said.

CHAPTER VIII

THE contrast of her new life with the old came to her most pungently in the restaurant. She watched the men and women as they walked to their tables, observed their attitudes, examined their faces as they talked—these were not the sights of her former hours. But already the years of the unpleasant yesterdays were remote, the substance of a bitter dream; she was awakened now in this lighted place and one of her desires was near her. An orchestra played behind a lattice hung with wistaria and the music made her senses languorous, like an old wine. She did not want to leave this place; she was regretful when they stood up to go.

They came out to the street. A blind beggar was near the door with a decoy of never-sold pencils extended in a grimy and rigid hand; his features were contracted in a dumb grimace. A young woman and a man, walking rapidly, passed close to him, ignoring him, like a pair from another world. The young man bent down close to the face of the girl and they talked to each other with the eagerness of portentous communication. A taxi stopped at the curb and a large woman with a gaudy, painted face descended like a goddess from a disreputable heaven. Julia linked arm to arm with her companion, drew in a breath of ardent pleasure, conscious for the moment of the manifold aspects of life and viewing them as a thrilled spectator in the stadium of a gorgeous coliseum. He had turned his face to hers, and was speaking to her.

"Where shall I take you now?" he asked. "We can go any place you fancy."

"Any place where we can be alone and talk to each other," she replied.

He hesitated a second, puzzled.

"Well—" he began.

She pressed her fingers intimately against his arm.

"Let's go to your apartment," she said. "I want to see how you live without anyone to take care of you!"

His laugh responded to the mocking pathos of her voice.

"That's better than any other thing we could do," he said. "Maybe you can tell me many ways to make my lot easier!"

He started the car and they drove away side by side. Julia felt that her companion was a little surprised; he had not expected her suggestion. It pleased her to pique him, to make herself a little unfathomable, to touch their intimacy with the quick and the unexpected that would be like a zest to their companionship. With a fine assurance she recognized herself as the composer of their situations; the potentialities of their actions were in her hands like plastic clay, awaiting the modelling of her deft fingers. And this knowledge gave her her personal acquaintance with the unexpected; she had not foreseen such a rôle. Her senses stirred with the pride of her power.

The man at her side was silent now, pondering the girl who was near him. His mind groped for a symbolic picture of her, a representation that would illumine that which was essential in her. Yet he captured no single image; he found no sure interpretation. He saw her silhouetted in the night, waiting for him in the park, her features uncertain, her eyes large in the dim light. He perceived her parting the curtains in the little parlour of her home, coming in to him, smiling and slender, with the bronze glints of her abundant hair accentuated by the unmellowed light. She sat near him at the table in the restaurant, vivacious and zestful. He had the picture of her standing close to him on the sidewalk, asking him to take her where they could talk and be alone with each other. He was uncertain of his ability consistently to please her: which of his qualities had the stronger appeal? How should he present himself to her? What was her desire?

They turned a corner and stopped in front of his apartment house. He stopped the engine, jumped out, and helped her to descend. They went indoors, ascended in the elevator cage and paused outside his door whilst he fitted his key into the lock. He entered first and turned the switch-button on the wall. They were in his living room. Julia stood near the door, surveying the place.

She smelt a reminiscent odour of cigars, and at once she conceived the picture of him seated near the table in the room, the table-lamp lighting his face with a warm glow. She smiled at the intimacy of her fancy. In her picture he was alone; hereafter she would be with him. She crossed to the table and lighted the lamp. She found the photograph of a pretty woman propped up against a small rack of books. She took it in her hands and examined it. He had crossed to her side and was close to her.

"Who is this?" she asked.

"A girl I used to know. . . ."

"Did you know her well?"

"Oh—pretty well."

"Did you make love to her? Did you kiss her?"

He smiled; he laughed a little with surprise and embarrassment.

"Well—" he began.

"I suppose you did!" she said.

For a moment she held the photograph as before, her head bent, looking at it. His eyes caught on the curve of her cheek, white with allure. Her brown hair lay over her head like innumerable threads of a miraculous spinning. He saw her slim, motionless fingers holding the picture.

Then she gripped the edges tightly and swiftly tore the cardboard once crosswise, once downward. She dropped the four pieces from her fingers and turning over and over they fell to the floor like grotesque squares of forlorn snow.

She looked up at him; her cheeks were coloured, her eyes, glinting emerald among their browns, seemed immensely larger. A smile that had something more than the quality of a smile was shaped on her lips.

"You won't make love to her any more!" she exclaimed. "You won't give her any more of your kisses! There is only one person you can kiss now!"

She paused, she met his eyes, she appeared to wait for some fulfilment. There was invitation in her upturned face, in her singularly smiling lips, her warm throat, her drooping shoulders. And still he was puzzled; he was not sure of her desire. He regarded her a moment, speechless and motionless. Then he put out his hands, touching her arms. At once her arms were about him, her slender body was pressing close to him. He kissed her; her lips responded with an eager pressure; her hands reached upward and buried themselves in his dark hair.

For a moment he wondered, he could not understand the miracle of her fondness for him. Then he accepted the fact itself joyfully, ceasing to search for its explication. He kissed her cheeks and her eyes, the tips of her ears; with his fingers he caressed the round whiteness of her neck, the curve of her shoulders, her soft, small hands. He felt that his senses could never tire of touching her.

"What do you think of me?" she murmured. "How much can you care for me so soon?"

"More than I ever cared for anyone," he answered.

"Did you think, when you went out for a walk in the park last night, that you'd find a little sweetheart?"

"It was the dearest surprise of my life!"

"Are you really so fond of me, dear? Do you really want me?"

Like a Circean magic her words evoked a sudden vision. Life as he had been living it was inconsequent, without significance, a succession of trivialities; she was the ferment of new experiences. Everything seemed possible with her; he could scarcely conceive the measure of her potentialities. He wanted her always as she was now; close in his arms, near and fragrant, a flower to his touch.

"I don't want you just for to-day," he said. "Sweetheart, I want you every day. I'm tired of being alone; you can make me happy. I'll do everything to bring about your own happiness. Will you marry me, dear?"

As his sentences entered her listening ears she had a swift picture of the remote life she had abandoned: her mother, her sister, the sordid street, the sordid days; how swiftly she had conquered! How fully she had come to her desire! She felt the fine assurance of a near and unseen genius, guiding her fortunes, shaping the wonder of her days. She was unassailable and strong. She paused only a moment, a moment to think of the past, a moment to dream, before she told him yes.

CHAPTER IX

In those days that followed, they had many pleasant, practical things to plan. They decided, for the present, to keep the little flat in which he had been living, but Julia revolutionized its interior. There were many things she had always wanted; her ideas were voluptuous.

She haunted the stores each day, purchasing for their home. She bought pictures, lamps, cushions, vases, a big piece of blue silk brocaded with gold for the sofa, a blue screen painted with figures like a tapestry, an old Kurdestan rug with soft reds and yellows. She bought with the pleasure of a child, with a buoyant naïveté, enjoying the simple delight of spending money.

Although they were together nearly every evening, they advanced very little in intimate acquaintance with each other; they were too occupied with their immediate plans. Julia found her lover acquiescent to all her wishes, and it pleased her to play this dominant rôle. His word was "yes" to all her desires.

Sometimes, after a day in the stores, she came into his office, usually late in the afternoon. It delighted her to observe the pride with which he received her; she was introduced as his fiancée. Occasionally, when she called and he was out, she sat at his desk in the inner office, toying with his papers, drawing little figures on his correspondence, talking, in the interval of waiting for him, to his secretary.

This young man was always effusive in his pleasure at her visits. He was a blond fellow, big, vital, laughing: Julia always thought of him as the specimen of a healthy animal. Sometimes when she came in she found him talking very confidentially on the telephone; she knew he was the sort to have many girls; she could picture quite easily how he spent his evenings. His vivacity, his ease of speech was a foil to the quiet, almost diffident manner of Walter; she always found her lover closer to her desire after she had talked for a time to this assistant. And now she was growing impatient for the day of their marriage.

His eagerness was commensurate with her own and they determined that further waiting was unnecessary. There was now the question of their honeymoon trip. For several days Julia pondered this, her wishes fluctuant. She thought of the seashore, the mountains, a tour in their car, a sea trip—but the life of the city drew her more strongly than any of these things.

"Let us stay right here, dear," she said. "For a whole month you'll do nothing but be with me; we'll go to all the restaurants, all the theatres; we'll drive out in the country and have picnics together; we'll have late suppers in our own flat, just you and me!"

He consented with his customary pleased yielding, and they determined to wait no longer. One autumn twilight, gold with the departing sun, they got in their car and drove to a minister's house, who was prepared to receive them. His wife and daughter, a tow-haired young girl with an inclination to giggle, were present as witnesses. The ceremony was performed in a cubical little parlour. The pair stood near an ancient what-not, gaudy with ugliness; the divine was in front of them, reading the service from a little book with pale lavender covers. Julia was relieved when it was over.

"What a dreadful place!" she exclaimed as they emerged.

Her husband pressed her arm close to his side. He helped her into the car with a sublimated tenderness.

"Now you're really mine!" he said.

"Yes! Do you want me just as much, now that I am yours, dear?"

"No one was ever more dearly wanted!" he replied.

They drove away together, going straight to their flat. It was dusk when they entered. Inside the door he took her in his arms, he touched her lightly, he kissed her gently. She clung to him closely; he softly caressed the strands of her hair. Then, suddenly, she clasped her hands tensely about his

neck, she pressed his face tight against her own.

"Give me real kisses!" she exclaimed. "I'm your woman!"

There was a disappointing interval, a second, a moment, before he responded.

CHAPTER X

Now, when she awakened in the morning, she had the pleasant emotion of content. She often remembered the other mornings, the bleak hour of arising, the dreary prospect of a day in the store, the vision of nothing better for to-morrow. It was agreeable to revive these memories, for the sake of contrast. Instead of the hurry, the clatter, the ill-humour of that other breakfast table she sat down now with Walter, talked to him quietly, was aware of the tenderness in his eyes. Sometimes he talked to her about the business he planned for the day, and she listened to him in silence, only half hearing, content, a little indulgent, like a mother attending the schemes of her child.

Toward him she had quickly acquired this feeling of maternity. She found him a simple man, whose tenderness found a response in her compassion. He did not love her with a complex fire; his love was a gentle thing, that sought to serve her and achieve her happiness by granting each one of her spoken wishes.

Sometimes, as she sat looking at him, she wondered at the divergence of their souls and keenly appreciated his child-like faith in her. It was a touching faith, because he understood her so little. He placed in her hands the simplicity of his happiness with the innocence of a mariner consigning his fortunes to an unfathomed and uncomprehending sea. Often she laughed quietly as she recollected her first impressions of him.

He had come to her then as a mystery. She recalled the night in the park when he emerged from the dusk of the path like a knight of high adventure. His slender person, his manner that marked him off so distinctly from the other men she had known, seemed then to presage a thousand potentialities and the fulfilment of her vague dreams. She smiled at the naïveté of her imagination. She had in no way seen him, but only one with his externalities, whom she had clothed in the investiture of her fancy. Sometimes she sighed as she remembered.

One after another, her days went by quietly. Usually she spent her mornings indoors, languorous, inactive. In the afternoon she often visited the stores; the years of deprivations still served to make buying a unique pleasure. Occasionally she stopped at Walter's office and spent a few moments with him. That healthy animal, the blond secretary, was still on hand.

Julia found that she disliked him. She resented his smiling politeness, his easy tongue, his suavity, his eagerness to talk with her. Often she greeted him with an aloofness that was almost without courtesy. Yet, in pondering her dislike, she found herself somewhat unreasonable.

One afternoon, emerging from a tea-room, she heard her name exclaimed suddenly in a woman's voice. She turned, surprised, and found her sister Bertha staring at her.

"For the love of God!" cried Bertha. "Julie!"

Julia, very much embarrassed, was speechless for a moment.

"Where in the name of heaven have you been, Julia?" went on her sister. "You disappeared like a shot. Mom was half crazy. I told her she could bet it was some man. Lord, kid, I never thought you'd do anything like that! And you always telling me to be careful and all that!"

Julia smiled at Bertha's suppositions. The child could never understand the motives of her abrupt departure. Julia felt it quite useless to endeavour any explanations.

"Bertha," she said, "I'm married now. . . ."

Bertha's eyes gleamed, her face became cunning, she smiled with a turn of her lips that was half a grimace.

"You're lucky," she said. "You always got off easy in everything; I remember that. What's the idea of keeping under cover then, like a groundhog?"

Julia vouchsafed no answer to this question. Instead she took Bertha's arm and walked her a few steps along the pavement.

"Would you like to come and see my flat?" she asked. "Have you time?"

"Sure, I've got time. You don't ask why I'm out this hour in the day, instead of at work. Well, I don't have to work."

Julia realized now that in the commonplace of her own leisure she had quite forgotten her sister's position, and wondered nothing about her presence on the street. She turned her face in surprised inquiry.

"What do you mean, Bertha?"

"Well, you're not the only one that can get married!"

"*You*, Bertha?"

"Absolutely! Just two weeks ago. You remember that John I said I met? Well—I got him! We're going to have a place of our own in a couple of months. Say, there's nothing like this life, is there, kid?"

She squeezed Julia's arm, she grimaced, she winked one eye rapidly several times. Julia was half afraid that she would jump up and down as she had often done, in her exuberance, when they shared the little room together.

Bertha was unchanged. Her abounding vitality displayed itself in the nervous quickness of her speech, her gestures, her walk. The almost obscene sophistication of her soul, mingled with a sardonic naïveté, was revealed in her speech. Julia had the car near and they drove away together to visit her apartment. She was silent while her sister, with a flood of volubility, commented on her luck.

The cascade of her observations was accentuated when they reached the flat. She examined everything, fingered everything, asked the prices, whistled, exclaimed.

"Lord, you're lucky!" she said. "You took an awful chance, kid, but I don't blame you; you had *luck!*"

There could be no question of Bertha's approval, Bertha's entire conviction of her sister's good fortune. Her voluble approbation brought Julia a curious enlightenment, a train of thought assayed only vaguely heretofore. These things in her home, purchased by the generosity of her husband, were, plainly enough, Bertha's estimate of entire success; they were the measure of Bertha's aspirations. What she had achieved—leisure in which to do nothing and a clutter acquired from the stores—was the desideratum of which the younger girl dreamed. And suddenly she was completely aware that having attained Bertha's ideal, by some sardonic miscarriage of her fortunes, she had failed most completely in her own! Gifts inconsequent and trivial had come to her, whilst the glittering hours of her fancy, her brave imaginings, were most completely denied! She grew silent; when her sister said good-bye she was almost too abstracted to answer.

CHAPTER XI

She sat in her room, motionless, like one taking breath after a great exertion. Somehow, it puzzled her deeply in contemplation, life had tricked and deceived her, and like a sinister mangonist, caused her to accept the base metal of a counterfeit for gold. She thought of Walter and his tepidities—why was she here with him, in his house, accepting placidly the meagreness of his gifts? He could not move nor stir her, he could not bring the quickening of her breath, the colour to her cheeks, the light of a fire within her eyes. Then, with her brows contracted, she profoundly resented his blind presumption of her happiness. In that instant she viewed him with a deep contempt.

It was already dark; her room, faintly illumined by the lights from the street, seemed in a suspended twilight malign and unreal. She heard the maid, in the kitchen, moving about in the preparation of dinner. The noises of the outdoors came in to her in a softened harshness. Presently the door from the hall opened; her husband came in. He walked past her room, looking for her. His step returned; he opened her door; she did not turn to look at him.

"All alone? Dreaming?" he asked.

His voice was gentle and tender, his abominable gentleness, his undesired tenderness. She did not answer him.

He quickly approached her chair; he bent down and peered into her face.

"Dear!" he exclaimed. "What is the matter?"

"I don't want to talk," she said.

She knew that he was staring at her, she imagined his widened eyes, the consternation of his features.

"Tell me!" he cried. "What is the matter, sweetheart? Are you sick? What can I do for you?"

"You can let me alone!" she said.

Her mood astonished him. He stood near her chair, looking down at her, seeing the shadowed outline of her head, the mist of her hair, deeply troubled, uncertain, hesitant. Finding her so, it was as if he had come upon a new phenomenon, not in the compass of his understanding, to disquiet and disturb him. But at last his normal acquiescence prevailed over his hesitation; moving on tiptoes, he softly left the room. Julia remained as before, motionless and alone.

When she did not appear at dinner he made another effort to probe her strangeness. She repelled him again, with listless words conveying an immense decision. With a distracting emotion of futility, he retired to the living-room and spent the evening walking about between the table and the chairs like one lost in a labyrinthine maze.

Julia did not come out from her room. Presently she took off her dress and lay down on her bed, her white arms stretched out on either side of her, her opened eyes looking up at the ceiling.

Her mind was inactive, her thoughts vague, like those of one in a trance. She did not move; her supine body, indolent, careless, suggested the supreme indifference of death. After a time she went to sleep, passing out of the state of consciousness almost imperceptibly.

It was late in the morning when she awakened. Glancing at the little clock on the bureau, she saw the time and experienced a sense of relief: he must have gone to his office; she would not have to talk to him.

She got up and spent a languorous hour at her toilet. Her mind felt dull, she seemed to lack the power of consecutive thought. Her body was flexed, as if all the muscles were relaxed after a supreme activity. The morning passed and after lunch she dressed to go out.

She had no goal. For a time she drove about in her car, choosing the most crowded streets in order that the purely physical abstraction of manipulating the machine might be most complete. Later she stopped in front of a moving-picture theatre and went in. She did not look at the pictures; the place served as a stop-gap for a time. The afternoon was nearly passed; she stood up and left the theatre. Coming out, abstracted, unobservant, she nearly collided with a man.

"Mrs. Hastings!" he exclaimed.

She looked up. It was her husband's blond secretary.

"Hello!" she said. "Where are you going?"

"Nowhere in particular. Mr. Hastings left early this afternoon—said he was going home. I thought I'd take a stroll before I had dinner."

Then he had gone home to look for her! What a turmoil he must be in by this time! At once she resolved not to go home; she did not want to see him. She smiled at the tall fellow at her side.

"Who are you having dinner with?" she asked.

"No one at all. I'm deserted by everyone to-night."

"Then suppose you let me have it with you? I don't feel like going home."

For an instant he looked at her with widened eyes; he regarded her as one might a swiftly presented problem.

Then he laughed and took her arm.

"Nothing could be better! Do you know, I've always been interested in you! I've often wondered if—"

"If what?"

"If we'd ever go out together. If we'd—ever know each other. . . ."

She lifted her brows; she met his eyes, that regarded her with the light of a freshly aroused expectation.

"Did you think that was possible?" she asked. "What made you think so?"

"Well—I imagined— Hastings is a good fellow, you know, but—"

"You imagined he wasn't exactly the man for me?"

"You've said it for me!" he laughed.

"And what makes you think *you* are? Do you think you are?"

He pressed his fingers against her arm. He inclined his head close to her face.

"Are you willing to find out?" he asked.

She shrugged her shoulders; she drew him with her toward the curb. The innuendoes of their conversation gave her a certain pleasure. She was indifferent to what might happen.

"Here is my car," she said. "I can't leave it here; we might as well make use of it. Do you know what I want for dinner?"

They got into the car; he looked at her in inquiry.

"Some spaghetti and some red wine. We'll go to one of those Italian places. You can get a private room where we can be alone and talk."

The car pulled away from the curb. It was dusk and the arc-lights flared into being. The streets were crowded with hurrying men and women, going to their innumerable homes, their homes in which they found all the manifold possibilities of life, content and love, deception and hate, the voluptuousness of expensive possessions, the meagreness of poverty. Now, shrilling her horn in the traffic, Julia was vibrant with the desire of life, the desire of experience, the wanting of unseen events.

She tilted back her head and a light shone in her eyes like a veil of fire.

CHAPTER XII

THE little room in which they ate their dinner was decorated with several lurid oils representing Italian composers; the artist was a brave colourist and his subjects had an intense, boiled expression. The waiter was low-voiced; he came and went with a quiet tread, he knocked at the door before he entered; there was a furtiveness about this place. Julia sat opposite her companion, finding a pleasure in her escapade.

She liked his vivacity, his exuberance, his frank animality. He ate and drank with an obvious relish; he talked to her about foods and displayed a very considerable technical knowledge.

"Tell me," she said, "what do you do with your time away from the office? Do you know many women?"

"A few!" He looked into her eyes, laughing. "I like women!"

"I know you do! And have you any special preference? Do you like women like me?"

He sipped a little of his wine, regarding her for a moment as if in speculation.

"I don't know anyone just like you," he said. "You puzzle me a little."

"How? In what way?"

He paused again, still looking at her. Then he smiled with his frank simplicity.

"Well, then, again, perhaps you don't! I suppose you saw me and liked me and thought you would like to spend an evening with me. What's the use of making problems out of things? I take everything that comes!"

She was amused at his naïve assurance, his effervescent conceit. She examined his face, looking at his blue eyes, his thick, yellow hair, his full lips. She liked him; she wondered how much ardour he would display should he make love to her. She felt that she wanted him to kiss her and speak his easy insincerities in her ears. She stretched out her hand and closed her fingers over his own.

"Then if I don't puzzle you any more," she said, "tell me just why I came here with you to-night?"

He responded to her touch; he pressed her fingers with his. Standing up, still retaining her hand, he arose and came around the table. He drew her to her feet, he took her cheeks between his palms. With her head thrown back she saw for a moment his smiling lips; her eyes closed; she waited for his kiss. His lips touched her own and for a moment they were immobile in this silent embrace.

She drew herself out of his arms; she looked at him a second; she laughed. It had not thrilled her—it had been no more than a caress of a boy. He had no emotions to give her; she had no response for him. She continued to laugh.

"I must go!" she said. "Am I not foolish?"

She picked up her wraps from the chair, ran around the table, and whilst he stood in motionless astonishment she hurried from the room. The waiter was ascending the stairs as she went down. He turned to look after her in wide-eyed surprise.

She came out to the street, climbed into her car and started the engine with an explosive clatter. She pulled away swiftly. Her face was frowning, her eyes were set straight in front of her, her hands gripped the wheel with a savage tightness. Life seemed to her a sardonic antagonist that thwarted her with a malignant subtlety, a duellist whose scoring thrusts were swift and unforeseen. She was futile and weak, a thistledown in the wind, a cockle-shell on the sea, a bubble blown for the sport of the indifferent gods. She was angry at her impotence; she hated the emptiness of her searching hands.

Without a specific intent, she drove the car home. Outside the apartment she stopped, shut off the engine and hurried indoors. The elevator took her upstairs. She opened the door and entered her flat. At her step, her husband came hurrying through the hall and when he saw her he stopped and stared, as at an apparition. She knew then the emotions he must have experienced during her absence—his wonder, his astonishment, his despair. She envied him these emotions—he had no power to stir her own wonder, to arouse her own astonishment, to move her to a personal despair. On his lips she saw words struggling for expression.

She did not wait for his speech, she did not wait for his questions. She ran toward him laughing, laughing in an hysteria of disappointment, of wanting, of dreams unfulfilled. She threw her arms about him and he staggered back with the impetuosity of her embrace; between the convulsion of her laughing she kissed him. She would make him give her something, she would seize *something* from her life with him! She would make him unhappy, she would bring him disaster and humiliation—yet she was not sorry.

As with a flame, she burned with the desire of life, even its sting and its defeat!

THE MAN WHO FOOLED THE GODS

By Oscar C. Williams

IN the whole world there was only one man who lived his life as the gods had conceived it. And the gods communed among themselves and said.

"We should reward him. He is not like other men in whose hearts Passion rules and Will is huddled in a corner. He is not like other men in whose hearts some trembling, conscience-spurred Resolve creeps forth timidly, but flees at the sight of Temptation. No, he is not like other men. We should reward him."

And the man was summoned before the sapphire thrones. And the head-god spoke to the kneeling man and said,

"For the good that you have done, for the upright life that you have led, we shall grant you anything that you may wish. Think! Let all your years of righteousness culminate grandly in one spoken desire!"

And the man answered and said,

"All my life have I seen other men live deep in the joys of sin, but their hours fled away, and I thought that this was punishment enough for them. But often I wondered why my hours, too, should go away—I, who filled them with righteousness. All my life have I yearned for one hour that will not go away, one hour that is not mortal. Grant me, therefore, only one such hour."

And the gods granted the man's wish immediately without question. And the man is living an eternity of debauchery in that one hour that will not go away.

SOUVENIR

By Muna Lee

I REMEMBER you because of a little hill
Where the violets grew thicker than the grass,
And through my memory flames and whistles still
A flock of red-winged blackbirds we saw pass.

Because of a rain-filled night I remember you,
And a tree we came on suddenly in the fall
And a vague horizon that broke and foamed in blue
—But I do not remember any words of yours at all.

MOTHER

By Lawrence Rendel

I

THEY had lain there long in silence, chewing at meditative grass-stems, looking out over the self-consciously picturesque Swiss landscape.

Two young men, leanly trim in uniforms, radiant with that recovered luxury of cleanliness, of which it seemed to them they could never get enough. Two every-day fellows, the kind one sees in offices, barbers' chairs or on street-cars, who had been suddenly uprooted from all the accustomed decencies and safeties of civilization, dragged through the obscenities of war and then, by sheer chance, it almost seemed, dropped down into the quietude of this Swiss internment.

How they had come there is of little concern, they themselves accepted it without question. Nor did they question why they should choose to be so much together. That was the way of all camps; each to his liking, pair by pair, side by side, lying for hours in mutual silences. To Manning, the elder of the two, it had lately occurred that perhaps those silences were really more dangerous to the world than even the material destruction of the war. He could see them, lying out over a large portion of the map of Europe: pair by pair, stretched out without speaking, their young eyes turning backwards with a certain deadly clarity of vision.

It was Carter who spoke first, spreading on the turf before him an American newspaper, some three weeks old, at which, in unconscious rejection of all the conventional emotions, he had merely glanced and then dropped without further notice.

"The fellows who put up this bunk make me sick."

It was said without rancour, just a flat statement of frank fact. Without troubling to turn his head, Manning swept the end of his eye across the page.

The editorial sheet, bearing the usual war cartoon, a sentimental one, this time; one of those sure-fire stock-in-trades which cartoonists keep tagged away on the shelves of their minds against the drouth of an idealess day. A little woman, pathetically frail and black-clad, her face wan beneath a coronal of white hair, but her eyes tremendously shining as she gazed from a window at a very large star on a very black-ink night.

She must have been over sixty, at least, as women go in these days, but on the wall behind her a service flag, with one star, hung above the photograph of a uniformed youth of apparently about nineteen, carefully inscribed "My Son." Beneath it all ran the legend, "The Star that Shines on Him"; and as further aid to the intelligence of the reader there hovered, near the ceiling of that pictured room, a wraithlike vision of cheerful carnage.

"Bunk," Carter remarked again.

"Good policy, though," Manning murmured indifferently. "It is emotions that rule in these days, not reason."

"The dear, old, conventional, American mother," he went on. "The idol of the press, the job-saver of the third-rate cabaret 'artist.' Always about seventy, always leaking at the eyes or bending over a wash-tub, always gazing out into the night from poverty-stricken windows. And yet, with such a hor-

rible warning kept constantly before the people, they wonder and howl at race suicide. But then, to suggest that a mother could possibly be any other way would probably seem sheer anarchy to the man in the Tube. All the same, my mother—"

Manning's tone grew amusedly reminiscent and a grin tugged at the corners of his mouth.

"I'm thirty, but after three o'clock in the afternoon my mother would pass for thirty-eight at most. While as for watching at windows, torn with anxiety for her wandering boy . . . I wish I had ten dollars for every hour I have spent dozing on smoking-room sofas, waiting until she has had enough dancing at about four g.m. That type you have there doesn't exist, that's all."

There was silence again, lasting long, while a chime of bells stole up on the breeze from a steeple in the toy village down below. Faintly it came, thrillingly sweet, almost elfin, bringing with it a queer little ache that this life about them might be really as picture-bookish as it looked.

Then Carter spoke, casually picking up the thread again as though only an instant had elapsed.

"Yes, it does exist. . . . I knew one, once."

Manning's silence, though it could not be deepened, took on a subtly different quality, as if the ears behind it had been emptied of the stream of his own thoughts, leaving only a void of listening. He had expected that Carter would speak, some day. The safety-valve of twenty-four is that, sooner or later, it must talk.

Looking quietly off at a snow peak across the valley, avoiding any glance at the other, he waited.

II

"The Brays were the people I knew the best of all—that is, next to my own family, of course," Carter hastily amended.

"It must have been before I was born that they came to that big, old house on the Ocean front. A great rambling barn of a place, half a mile from the little beach town and ten miles from everywhere else, but rather jolly in its way. Sand-dunes and cedars back of it, in front nothing but the beach and sea, with the highest tides breaking only twenty feet from its front door.

"It was a bit inconvenient for the old man, though; his office was in the city, twenty miles inland, and he'd run in and out on the cars every day. He was of a kind which is dying out now, the regular old-school American of the seventies, all white hair, black string tie and mild courtesy. You could never have taken him for anything but what he was. He could have stepped straight on to the stage of any theatre, and the moment he entered you would have known that he was the faithful old family lawyer, bringing the will to be stolen. And, curiously enough, that was just the sort of thing which was always happening to him in his practice. Somehow you knew that, too, the first time you looked at him. There are some people who just seem put up to bear with things in a gentle, puzzled sort of way.

"The fact is that 'dear old Mr. Bray,' as everybody called him, was still trying to live in a world which had disappeared some thirty years before, only he hadn't found that out yet. But it was beginning to wear him down, together with that forty miles in the cars every day; but Mrs. Bray would not hear of moving to the city.

"She had bought that house on the Ocean front especially for the children, you see. Her whole life was devoted to them, she said, and you couldn't be with her half an hour without seeing it was so.

"'A little inconvenient, so far from the town and the cars,' she would apologize to visitors, 'but it is so good for the children. In the city—you understand—the—the *influences!*'

"There were four of those children: Fred, Beatrice, Theo and Sydney—he was just a kid of my own age, we were

always together, and that is how I know about it all so well.

"The elder ones were a handsome lot, though Syd was ordinary enough to look at, and their appearance was at once their mother's pride and an added anxiety; hence that house, half a mile from everywhere, for their protection from 'influences.' What those might have been she never explained, but then she didn't have to, she had a way of putting things over without explanation."

"She would mention those 'influences' at least once a day, and always with such a look, so appealing, so brave, and with such a quivering tremor of mother love that one felt like kissing her feet for it—or, if one didn't, one felt like a brute not to.

"At least, you knew she was right. There was probably never an instant in her whole life that Mrs. Bray hadn't been exactly right. How old she was I can't quite say, but it couldn't have been so very much, for I remember Syd when we were both of us hardly out of our baby-buggies, but it seems as though even then Mrs. Bray was already grey and faded and pathetic—and brave.

"She was just a wisp of a woman, always in black, with white lace at her throat and wrists, and a little stringless bonnet of lilac flowers when she went out. I can see it now, perched on her wavy white hair like a little crown, its very shabbiness its jewel.

"A handy little woman, too; always patching, darning and mending, painting a floor or fixing a lock, keeping the big old place in perfect order; but always with time to greet everyone as they came in at the door, with a smile, a kiss and a cheery:

"'Back at last, dear. And what has my son—or my daughter—been doing to-day?'

"At least it should have been cheery; it sounded so—deliberately so—tremendously so—and yet—

"It was when Syd was about ten or eleven that he first really noticed that greeting. Up till then he had merely taken it as an ordinary phenomenon of daily life, like breakfast and evening. It was summer and vacation; he had been down the beach all the morning and had barely got home in time for dinner, but his mother met him at the door all the same, running from the kitchen to open it, flushed from the stove, with her smile, her kiss and that inevitable:

"'Almost late, dear—but never mind. And now, what has my boy been doing all the morning?'

"As an actual fact the kid hadn't been doing anything. It was, perhaps, the first time in his life he hadn't anything to say to her, for usually he was full of kid stuff, as boys are at that age. He must have been dreaming down there on the beach—he had just begun to find out that he could do such a thing—for all at once the morning was gone and he had to race to get home.

"He had not thought of it until she spoke, then that direct question made him feel rather foolish as he realized how the hour had slid away. It even half scared him with a sense of some incomprehensible change in himself. All he seemed able to do was to stand there, get red and blurt out:

"'Why—I haven't done anything, Ma.'

"I guess that must have been the first time that Syd Bray ever saw his mother's eyes; or, perhaps it was the first time he had given her such an answer, or perhaps, again, it was the first time of a number of things, for him. At least, he saw them then. They were very large and light, really brilliant, but with a hint of darkness in them, too, as though that light were but a reflection and sometimes that which was behind it came through. It did so at that moment as her hands tightened on his shoulders in a gay half-reproach:

"'Oh—but I hoped that my boy would always tell his mother everything that he did. I shouldn't like to think that one of my sons had done anything he couldn't tell me.'

"The trouble was that the poor kid had nothing to tell, you see; and yet

he wriggled under her gaze, feeling half guilty about it, and half angry at feeling so, all of which simply made him turn red and sullen.

"'Why, Ma—I've told you, haven't I?' he mumbled.

"He had a glimpse of her face as she turned away. It had paled, quiveringly so, even as that of one who has received a hurt and conceals it for the sake of the one who dealt the blow. All through dinner Syd looked at his plate, unable to meet her eyes, but he could feel them upon him, not reproachful, but loving; bravely filled with the hope of one who fears the worst but determinedly will not see it—and who sees it all the more for that rejection. It should have made him sorry, melted him, but all he could feel was that half cold, half hot sense of mingled guilt and anger.

"It all passed off, of course. He forgot it, as boys do, but almost unconsciously, from that time, he never came home without some story to tell his mother. If he really had none to tell then he would make one up, automatically beginning the moment he came in sight of the house.

"It was some time after that before Syd discovered that the others were doing the very same thing. There was no intent of concealment about it; they had no reasons for concealment and but little opportunity for such. There were no 'influences' in that little beach town. School—Grade or High, according to their ages—tennis, a swim, perhaps an ice-cream soda and a moving picture in the evening, an occasional picnic, such was the round of their lives. They went to school and came back; they went out and came back; always back to that opened door and that smile and cheery 'And what have my chicks been doing to-day?'

"Except for the same round, so usual that the telling of it had become wearisome, the only logical answer was 'Nothing.' But 'nothing' was the one thing that Mrs. Bray could never accept.

"They even consulted each other about it as, strolling back along the board walk, the great chimney of the house began to loom above the wind-blown cedars of the dunes. Beatrice and Theo, sixteen and seventeen, always in white, it seems now, with big bows in their hair, and arms full of books. Fred, long legged, silent footed in tennis shoes, peering out from under the down-turned rim of his white beach hat with a slightly puzzled gaze. Mechanically, with the cool acceptance of youth of what they knew to be inevitable, one of them would exclaim:

"'Oh—what are we going to tell mother to-day?'"

III

SILENCE again, a tinkle of cow-bells from an upland pasture as Carter paused, lying there on his stomach, chin propped on hands, looking out across the Thal. Serene, unemotional, really seeing not that snow peak dominating the range, but those inner pictures, the tinted flickerings of his mental cinema screen, from which he spoke and to whose meanings his eyes were piercing with such an almost blasting clarity.

"So it went," he nodded. "Went on for several years more; but, of course, it couldn't last for ever—nothing does.

"It was when Syd was about fifteen that the first break came. It was through Fred that it happened—and to Fred, as well, poor chap. He was twenty-three then, one of those quiet chaps of whom one can never be sure just what he is up to, or if he is really up to anything at all. Kid as I was, I couldn't understand it at the time, but one of the things I best remember about Fred, and which somehow sort of sized him up for me, was a glance I once surprised him casting at his mother. Even at the time it made me feel queer, it was so half affectionate, so half hard, so wholly hungry—and so puzzled.

"Fred always gave one an impression that he was a bit puzzled by things. He was rather like his father in that; more modern, of course, and with more of the modern rebellion, but secretly baffled by the world in which he found himself.

It drove him back into his shell when what he really needed was drawing out of it. A girl could have done that, but he was shy of them. That was largely owing to Mrs. Bray. She had a way of saying, oh, so gaily, but with such a bravely concealed little shake in her laugh, that, of course, one of these days, her boys would marry and quite forget their poor little mother. But looking from now I can see how, when any girls had been about, she would contrive to speak of them; so sweetly, so understandingly, but with a sort of unquenchable hope—and why hope unless there is first fear? I can't explain it, it wasn't what she said, nor even how she said it, but let Fred look twice at any girl and in a few days there was an impression about the house that that girl was rather to be avoided—that she was, in fact, pretty much of an 'influence.'

"Fred was in a real-estate, stock-and-bond office in the city then. The McGowan and Strang company, the kind of office which owns its own twelve-story building and in which everybody is either prominent or the son of prominence. The Brays, you see, were quite 'folks' in their way and tremendously well thought of. People always spoke of them with that peculiar sort of admiration which has no intention, nor wish, to be in the least like what it admires.

"It was one night that it came—so many things seem to come at night. Fred arrived home in the middle of the week. That alone was surprising for, as a rule, it was only week ends that he spent at the beach now; so unexpected was it that for once he entered without Mrs. Bray's opened door and welcoming flutter of hands and kiss. So he just walked right into the living room, a picture of unbreakable peace with its shaded lamp, a glimpse of moonlit breakers through the range of ocean windows. Syd at his lessons, Beatrice doing some fancy work, Theo reading, Mr. Bray in his study, the door between half open: Mrs. Bray in her black and white lace, a wreath of lilac flowers on her grey hair, her thin hands busy with mending. She might have been cut from a cameo exactly as she sat there.

"Then the door opened and there was Fred, stripping off his gloves, throwing his hat on a settee. How little we know what enters with people through opened doors. He nodded to the girls and Syd, kissed his mother quietly as ever, but there was that in his atmosphere which brought her to her feet. Syd had never seen her quite so brave as at just that instant. How does that song go—?

"'*E is for her eyes with lovelight shining.*'

"That was it, exactly; and—

"'*T is for the tears were shed to sa-ave me.*'

"Not that she shed them, but you knew they were there. Inner tears of silent sacrificial heart-blood, dripping prayers for her boy—her *erring* boy; you knew that he was that from just seeing her. Fred saw it and it was then he gave that look I told you of. But he said nothing, just passed on into his father's study and shut the door, while Mrs. Bray sat bravely down again to her mending.

"That was all Syd knew of it that evening. He went to bed, in his alcove off the big room which was Fred's. He heard the girls come upstairs, quietly, instead of chattering as they usually did, then a steady murmur of voices from downstairs. He knew that something was up, but it is hard to disturb a boy of fifteen and he soon slept. Much later he was awakened again by voices in the same room with him, Mrs. Bray and Fred, speaking softly evidently so as not to arouse him, but every now and then a tone, though subdued, cut through the curtain of the alcove into his ears.

"He heard the word 'money,' Fred seemed to be in some trouble over it. His syllables, though indistinct, came with a wearily dogged persistence as if he were repeating a story already many times told.

"Then his mother's voice, all the more poignant for its careful repression:

"'My boy—if you would but speak.'

"'But mother, I *have*. That is all there is to it. I tell you I never even saw that money.'

"Fred was losing a little of his self-control; Mrs. Bray must have given a warning glance at the curtain, for he went on:

"'Syd is asleep. I looked in at him. Even if he isn't it makes no difference, he'll have to know some time.' A little pause; then came a significant: 'He might even believe me.'

"Then Mrs. Bray again,

"'My boy, if you would but soften your heart to me. Do you think that I would not stand by my sons through anything?'

"'No I don't. You have stood by for twenty-three years—every minute of the time. The trouble is that you won't stand by through nothing.'

"'But Fred—that money they found in your desk?'

"'I have told you that was my own.'

"'Oh, my boy—six hundred dollars?'

"'If you must know, I won it on the races.'

"'The races.'

"If I could give you Mrs. Bray's voice as she said that. Had she said 'on the steps of very hell' it would not have meant so much, for that is so abstract, while she made of that word 'races' an actual, present, cankering evil. In it you read her whole life, her years of desperate prayer and striving to guard her children from 'influences'; her agonized realization of how futile that struggle had been, then the anguished bravery of her appeal.

"'My son—my boy—can you not trust your own mother?'

"'I *have* trusted you.' Fred almost shouted. 'The trouble is that you can't trust me. Can't you understand that people do win on the races sometimes? But there—what's the use? You never have believed in any of us. We have all been forced to lie to you all our lives and now you are incapable of even hearing the truth.'

"'I am certainly incapable of believing it the truth that one of my sons is speaking to his mother in this way. I will see you in the morning.'

"That was all, for she left at once. Hidden though she was by the curtains Syd could almost see her going. The indomitable courage that kept her erect despite her load of sorrow; the love-light still bravely shining from her stricken eyes; the certainty that there would be only prayer instead of sleep for her that night—oh, the whole, general, damnable rightness of the woman.

"There was a long silence after she left; not that of an empty room but a full sort of silence which told Syd that Fred was standing there without moving. It was rather disquieting and Syd had a vague feeling of wanting to get up and go to him, but his fear of seeming foolish was stronger. After a while he heard Fred undressing and the light went out. He was glad of that, it was the usual, normal proceeding, bringing a comforting sense that things were going on in the proper routine.

"Then the curtains were pulled aside and he saw Fred standing by his bed looking down at him.

"'Awake?' he asked; and as Syd grunted he went on. 'I guess you heard, then?'

"He sat down and Syd saw he was in his bathing suit, a meagre affair of red and yellow stripes, his shoulders and limbs a sort of marble white in the wispy moonlight falling through the window.

"'You going swimming this time of night?' Syd asked and Fred nodded gloomily.

"'I feel like I need something after—God, you'd think a fellow's own mother would believe—but, hell, what's the use of grouching about it? It's always been that way. But you listen to me, kid, when your turn comes you get out of this, any way you can.'

"Syd squirmed under the bedclothes in a boy's uneasy self-consciousness at anything serious. Through the window he could see the ocean, deceivingly calm on the surface but with a heavy

ground swell that sent the breakers rolling almost up to the boardwalk, making the whole house quiver with their ceaseless force.

"As Fred rose to go, Syd grabbed at his arm.

"'Say, look out for rip tides, the beach was full of them this afternoon.'

"'I was swimming on this beach before you could walk.'

"That was true, and Fred's daring in the surf was almost a legend in the town. He was at the curtain now and Syd, on an impulse, sat up and growled:

"'See here, Fred—I believe what you told mother, anyhow.'

"He was half sorry he had said it the next instant, for the result was so strange, yet he was as strangely glad, too. Fred's arm was about his neck, cheek pressed to cheek. Only a moment, an awkward, fumbling sort of moment at that, but in it Syd had a sense of nearness such as he had never before experienced. His father's hand, his mother's kiss had never brought such a feeling of an inner union of complete understanding, which needed no words.

"Fred was gone. His cheek still hot. Syd listened to the creak of the stairs under bare feet, felt the rush of salt air blow up through the house at the opening of the front door.

"He never saw Fred again. Days later something was drawn from the surf and buried in his name, because of some clinging shreds of red and yellow. But Syd's last memory of his was that warm arm about his neck; his constant wonder, just what might have happened out that stretch of deserted beach, white and indigo under the moon, always with something unexpected about it in spite of its life-long familiarity. Had that really been a cry which had caught his ears, coming faintly through the roll of the surf, bringing him up half awake and half out of bed? He listened long, but the only sound was the hoarse night croak of a wandering pelican, and, reassured, sleep had claimed him again.

"Or had there really been no cry, and no intention of one? In spite of the wondering shivers which accompanied it, that thought rather haunted him, for it brought with it a certain avidness of curiosity.

"It all soon rolled off him, though, as things do at that age. Mrs. Bray was wonderful in the days which followed; they might almost have been specially designed as a chance for her to show her mettle, like that of some finely tempered blade which can bend and quiver, but never quite breaks. Hints of scandal began to leak out concerning Fred, rumours of suicide, whispers that the Bray sons were not all that they should be to be worthy of such a wonderful little mother.

"But Fred had told the plain truth that night. Even before that battered thing was given up by the surf, the son of the firm, young McGowan, had come, contrite and appalled, to say that the payment had been traced to another. In that hour Mrs. Bray was even more wonderful than before; her forgiveness, her submission, her constant faith and restored certainty in her lost son were almost superhuman. Young McGowan seemed to find them so, at least—with a side glance at Beatrice, who was just twenty then and had blossomed into a beauty.

"Within a year the two were married."

IV

WITH a nod which seemed to relegate the affair to inevitability, Carter paused once more, selecting a juicy grass stem to thrust between his teeth, then turning his gaze to that distant glacier.

He looked serene as the sky overhead, but under the steady flow of his sentences Manning had felt things withering in himself. Unsuspected shreds of sentiment, lingering webs of conventional emotional reactions to conventional motional symbols, shrivelling and falling as leaves on a morning of flawless frost.

"Beatrice's part of it all is soon told," Carter went on. "She died at the birth of her first child. Died in her mother's arms.

"McGowan had tried to keep Mrs. Bray away; I think he was beginning to suspect things by then; but what husband could forbid his wife's mother at such an hour?

"That was Mrs. Bray's own expression. She had promised Beatrice that she would 'go with her through her hour'; and she began that 'hour' weeks before, never allowing Beatrice out of her sight. She was always sitting by, her face shining with such courage, such hope, that one could almost see, by contrast, that shadow of death which she was so bravely fighting away from her child.

"The doctor actually ordered her away, but it couldn't be done. She met him with such dignity, such a waving aside of the implied insult to herself, such a smile of tolerance for masculine non-comprehension of a daughter's natural feelings at such a time. So she sat on, keeping up Beatrice's spirits, but in spite of it all, as 'her hour' approached Beatrice went to pieces.

"She shrieked, they whispered afterwards, throwing herself about, clinging to her mother, crying out that she couldn't face it, screaming to the doctor to stop it somehow—anyhow.

"That leaked out, too, and people talked again about the Bray children and how terrible it must be for that marvellous little mother. Such a terrible end after all her unsparing efforts.

"So that was the end of that.

"Theo's turn come next. She was nineteen then, not as pretty as Beatrice, but by way of being a genius on the violin. Somebody heard her play and offered a year in Paris, and Mrs. Bray consented. You could see what it cost her to do so, but she was so bright, so tender and self-sacrificing over it, with never a tear, only joy that Theo should have her opportunity; but as she bent over that eternal mending her hands shook so that she could hardly draw the needle. Never would she let her own feelings stand in the way of any of her children. Not that she said it, but then she did not have to say it—she *was* it.

"All through the hectic weeks of Theo's preparations she sat by, shining again with that luminous spirit while Theo chattered excitedly of her plans. Mrs. Bray never entered into those plans, merely sat, whitening a little but smiling through it all with a smile such as a mother might give as one of her daughters thrust a blade into her heart.

"Even so it was not until the very last evening, with her trunks all packed, that Theo was finally worn down. Her fire of potential genius wasn't quite enough to stand that perpetual picture of a forsaken mother bravely bearing her loneliness. Enthusiasm, rebellion and longing alike collapsed against that example of shining fortitude. There was a scene in which Theo blew up, finally, and for ever, all her fire going off in screams and hysteria, dying down to a slobbering mess of reconciliation.

"She never went to Paris, of course. In a week she looked five years older; in a year she was a settled spinster, her mother's inseparable companion, her violin a mass of dust in an upstairs closet, her only reward the patting on the head sort of way in which people spoke of her.

"'Poor Theo, she might have amounted to something with her music, but she gave it all up to stay with that wonderful little mother of hers.'

"It is queer about people, isn't it? If you do, or if you don't, they don't like it either way.

"So that was the end of her."

"And Syd?" Manning asked, as Carter's silence took on a disquieting air of finality. "Don't you know what became of him?"

"Oh—Syd?" Carter's tone was half questioning, as of one recollecting something half forgotten. "Sure I know about him. Didn't I tell you he was the one I knew best of all?

"It was about five years ago that Syd's turn came—that turn which poor Fred had foreseen on that last night of his. Syd was eighteen then, just finishing High School. He had a chum, Mark, a wild sort of boy, nothing mean though, only too much vitality,

but it kept him in constant hot water and gave him a hard name in the town.

"One day Mark 'borrowed' a neighbour's automobile and he and Syd went off for a harum-scarum, cross-country sort of ride. It ended in a wreck, and the neighbour, it seemed, had not been consulted about that borrowing and had the motor-cops out after them. Both boys were taken at once to the local Juvenile Court; the sensation of the town that day, for they were perhaps the most important young ruffians ever brought before that bar. It looked cloudy for Mark, with his reputation against him, but Syd, in one of those impulses that boys sometimes have, tried to take the blame on himself.

"They tangled his story all up in three minutes, once they began to question him, of course. But the judge was a semi-human sort and he called the boys into his room for a private talk. His decision was that if Mark could make another boy like him well enough to try and take his blame, then he was too good for the Reform School, and should be put upon probation. As for Syd, the judge lectured him on the crime of perjury and its possible consequences, then sent him off, with a clap on the shoulder, in a 'don't do it again, but I kind of like you for having done it' fashion.

"Mark's mother was in court and she took them home and fed them. Such a feed. She was a big, vital, high coloured woman, the image of what Mark himself would be in twenty years. To Syd's astonishment she treated it all as a huge joke, but a joke of which they themselves were the funniest feature. Under the twinkle in her eyes and her openly sly digs, they writhed far worse than in the court itself, for they could feel no antagonism to her. They stuffed, writhed, reddened and laughed all at the same moment, the laughter taking all the sting from her thrusts, while still leaving a clean, open sort of ashamedness at having acted so like a couple of silly kids.

"All the way home Syd thought of her, especially of one last instant alone which she had contrived with him. Laughter still, but coming through tears, a choking, scrambling hug, a kiss, a murmured—'To try and do that for Mark—you dear, foolish blessed boy.'

"He knew that all the town was aware of his arrest; he could guess what awaited him if he passed through it. The condemnation of the respectable; the leering acceptance of the semi-disreputable, gathered on their special corner before the pool room, as though, in passing through that court, he had received a sort of 'reverse accolade' which made him one of them. But he no longer cared, that scrambling, messy hug had wiped all that away and he went boldly down the street with high head; not cocky, but quiet; not ashamed, but sorry.

"It was at the Bank corner that he saw his mother coming down the street. She had not been in court, the thing had been rushed through so quickly that there had been no time for her to get there. Otherwise she would have been there, be sure of that; it was, perhaps, the one thing lacking in her life, to sit bravely by and support a son publicly accused of crime.

"She was doing so now, in the best way she could; not hiding in her home, but courageously walking the town, her little shopping bag on her arm. Syd could imagine her at the meat market, her face shining, composed, without a tremor, as she asked for 'Some chops, please, and I want them especially nice—to-night.' And all around her, in the eyes of the customers and in the manner of the man who served her, a glow of admiration for this brave little mother who hid her riven heart and planned only the feast for the prodigal.

"For some reason that he could never explain Syd drew into a doorway and let her pass without seeing him. He never quite knew why he did that, unless it was a sudden sort of—of boredom with what he knew he must inevitably go through.

"He stood there in the shadow of that doorway, watching her pass; probably the first time he had ever seen his

mother when she was unconscious of his presence. Then he stumbled back to the stairs which led up to some dubious offices above. He will always remember those stairs, barren, dusty, with worn rubber treads; stairs of a certain ghastly, down at heels publicity, reft of all reserves, open to the tread of any feet. Luckily none came up or down in the half hour that Syd spent there. He had it out alone in the gathering gloom of the dusk.

"Not that he really saw it all then. It took years, and the shock of the war—the shock of its silences more than of its guns—to show him what he had seen. All he knew was that he came out of that doorway a different fellow, and with one only sentence ringing in his ears. Poor Fred's last words to him on that night:

"'Remember this, kid, when your turn comes you get out—any way you can.'

"He got out, then and there. He seemed to know that it was the only moment in which he would be able to; that, if he went back to that house on the ocean front, he would go just the same as Fred and Beatrice and Theo. Differently, of course, as each of them had gone in their own way, but just as surely. That dingy doorway to the street could lead two ways; back to all that, or on to another world, and he walked down the stairs and out of it to the onward path.

"He never went home that night, nor ever afterwards, just walked right out through that doorway into another life. He met vicissitudes, of course, knew something of want and hunger and loneliness, but all that was as nothing to the sense of freedom which was upon him; a feeling as of an escape from some net drawing ever closer.

"What was it he had seen? He hardly knows even now. Pride—that was his first impression as he watched his mother go by. An adamantine, cameo-like determination to be 'right,' at no matter what cost. A passion to be within a narrow circle, in which everything was set in order, with all the great rest of life kept rigidly at bay. And behind her a sort of invisible darkness not to be seen though it could be vaguely felt. That same darkness which he had once surprised underlying that mother light in her eyes.

"A peopled darkness, as though all the little frailties and humanities which she so rigorously rejected for herself, hung hungry in her wake, magnified a thousand-fold by her horror of them, waiting to leap and satisfy themselves on any who came sufficiently under her atmosphere.

"So—that was the end of that."

V

SILENCE again until the western sun cast shadows of peaks across the pasture, and around them the gentians shivered and folded their petals against the chill which would creep down from the high snows to meet the night stealing upwards from the Thal.

Then Manning rose, tapping the ashes from his pipe.

"Time to get back to camp—Syd."

MAN is surrounded by three types of women. Those who are trying to marry him, those who are trying to keep those who are trying to marry him from marrying him, and those who ignore him. He marries one of the latter.

THE ETERNAL MASCULINE

By Leonora Speyer

I

PAUL STURGIS looked long and plaintively at the little pile of manuscript which drifted over his nice old Sheraton writing-table.

There lay the unfinished story on which he had been more or less spasmodically working all the week—his best story, too, he considered—and visions of its appearance in one of the more pretentious and self-conscious magazines, beyond whose Alpine heights his panting ambitions sought not to climb, gleamed like a fair landscape before him.

Paul was a lawyer by profession, one of the many quietly successful ones. The little circle of devoted women-friends, enclosing him like a setting around some rare and greatly prized gem, knew nothing of him as a lawyer—for although Paul was always gaily loquacious, the "setting" suspected that it did not know much about *anything* that concerned him really—but Sybil told Anne "that a man had told Jack that he had heard Paul passionately pleading the cause of a New Jersey plumber one day in the courts, while, he, the man, was waiting for his case to come on, and that it was 'some performance.'"

They knew, too, that Paul wrote for the magazines. Occasionally they came across a short story of his, in which they sometimes recognized themselves, more or less fantastically garbed, or some little elaborated incident in Paul's life—and not very well told, to their surprise, for he was an unusually good raconteur and they wondered what happened when he began to write.

Anne brought home a sonnet one day, which she had found—and surreptitiously taken possession of—among the inevitable pile of back-numbers on the inevitable table of her dentist's waiting-room. It was a good sonnet, too,—"as good as gold," Anne said—and the "setting" decided that they liked it very much, and told Paul so.

But on the whole they did not think much of his writing, and as Paul himself seemed to prefer not talking about it, the subject was easily avoided.

He hated criticism of any kind. It hurt him horribly, made him coldly angry, and in that little group of joyously, mercilessly critical young minds, he passed unmolested.

For they had all learned, at one time or another, what "hurting" Paul meant—and how he had been missed as they ate of the bitter fruit of that tree of knowledge and sat alone under its dark branches.

For on these occasions Paul simply disappeared—and it was very difficult to find him again. Anything was better than these vanishings, the setting decided, and so they adapted themselves as well as they could to his debonair self-absorption, his ruthless lack of consideration, his "will-o'-the-wispness," as Anne called it. Paul was "pure pagan," Anne explained—the setting always came to her when in "Paul-troubles"—again Anne's way of putting it—she *interpreted* him the best, they said.

And they suffered him gladly! They did all the inviting, the telephoning, the ordering of theatre-tickets, of supper-tables and taxis. Anne interpreted that it wasn't that Paul was *stingy*, he sim-

ply didn't want the *bother*, and he was too busy to be worried with the details; it was enough that he *came*. And they all agreed that no party was in the least what they called worth while, if Paul were not there to make it gloriously, supremely worth while.

Once Sybil "struck," as she announced to her husband hotly. Paul had chucked her at the last minute, *once too often*, she would not stand it, she was *not* going to ask him to the house again, she was *not* going to Anne to have him explained, she was through, etc., etc.—

"Don't quarrel with Paul; we'll both miss him so," Jack had called to her from the hall, on his way to the office. But she *had* quarrelled with him—and Paul had disappeared as usual. It took months to get him back! Always glad to see her when they met, gaily, buoyantly glad, but always just leaving town "on a case" or oppressed with some work that "had to be finished" at home, and a typist coming to help him at eight o'clock.

"I'm sorry, Sybil, but I can't manage it"—and he never could. And perhaps she would meet him that same evening at the theatre with Anne; that maddening Anne who had warned her, or with Periwinkle or Madeleine, or worst of all with Mrs. "Gussie" Mainwaring, whom Sybil loathed. And Paul would beam and be so glad to see her, make no excuses, and Sybil, no reproach—she wanted him back too much, and as for Jack, he was positively sulking for him!

And one day he returned. She had found his new felt hat, whose untimely loss he had loudly lamented all winter, upon her return to the cottage in the country the following spring. And she had expressed it to him with a neatly-written label tied securely to its immaculate ribbon. It eventually reached him, battered but recognizable, and he wore it, label and all, when he walked in upon them one lovely Sunday morning, remarking that it was hot as Hades in town. Sybil was so glad to see him that she nearly wept, and Jack fell upon his neck and then made three of his wickedest cocktails, which they drank to the strains of "Ridi, Pagliacci" on the gramophone.

Once Anne rang him up at his office to tell him he simply *must* take her to the Russian ballet, as arranged weeks before; Anne had procured the tickets—such good ones, too—after great difficulties, and now Paul announced some work at home that simply had to be finished!

Anne suspected another short story; the last time she had seen him he had told her of an extraordinary scene he had just witnessed in the subway, between two infuriated men and a sobbing woman, evidently the wife of neither, but "something dearer," as Paul described her. He had remarked what a good story it would make and Anne had replied, apropos of nothing at all, "Don't forget we're going to Scheherazade on Thursday!" And they had both roared with laughter.

But Anne didn't laugh as she telephoned him about it. And Paul had suddenly interrupted her to say, "Listen! There's a band in the street! I'm going to hang the telephone out of the window for you to hear!"

There was a pause and then Anne heard the faint rhythmic strains of a Sousa march. And after a while Paul's voice, excitedly, "Did you get it? We ought to be dancing this minute! Isn't life hell, Anne! Don't be cross with me, my dear!"

And Anne wasn't. She thought of Sybil's bitter experience and of her own sage advice to her at the time, and so she turned with a very real little pain in her heart, to the next-best companion with whom to share the exotic joys of "Scheherazade."

"I know I'm silly to mind," she whispered to herself as she looked up the telephone numbers of the next-bests, "but there it is—I *do* mind!"

And added as she wrote down the numbers,

"God help the woman that falls in love with Paul Sturgis!"

II

AND now he sat looking at the scattered sheets on his writing-table.

"I could have finished it to-night," he said suddenly in a loud, firm voice. Paul gathered up the manuscript almost tenderly and put it in the drawer of the table. He looked at the clock, and his heart gave a queer little leap. Why had he asked Periwinkle to tea? He hardly knew. Sometimes he wondered if he were falling in love with her. "In love with a girl—? God forbid!" and he touched wood hastily.

At any rate, Periwinkle was coming to tea. Her name was Pervenche, because of a French grandmother, but Paul, not liking his French accent, called her Periwinkle "for short," and called her that, by the way, the first time they met; Anne said once that nobody minded *what* Paul did the first time and if they minded afterwards it was too late.

The setting had demurred a little over Periwinkle. Paul had told Anne she must ask her to dinner.

"But I hardly know her," Anne had weakly objected.

"That doesn't matter," declared Paul, "I've told her about you. She'll love you, Anne. And she's a peach! Thursday and Monday suit her best. Whom shall we ask?"

Poor Anne! She was just convalescing from an acute attack of what she called "bookitis," which meant going seriously into the question of the tradesmen's books, prior to drastic reform, and she had resolved not to have a dinner-party for a month at least. But what could she do?

And the party was certainly a huge success. Periwinkle proved a great addition to the setting, even Madeleine admitted that, as she said good-night to Anne.

"What's Paul doing with a *girl*, anyway?" she had disapproved on the telephone when asked to the dinner. "We're all married!"

"Paul says she isn't a bit like a girl," Anne answered happily. "He says she's as young and innocent as we are."

So Madeleine came. And Paul got her to ask them all down to her house on Long Island over Sunday.

He wondered if Periwinkle would mind there being no tea. She never seemed to care much about it herself, although her hands fluttered about her mother's tea table like two expert, administering, bejewelled white birds, every Wednesday from four to six.

He hoped she would not miss her tea, but nothing would have induced him to buy a tea-set and kettle, and all the rest of the paraphernalia! He hated food or the suggestion of food, in his rooms; he did not even breakfast there and certainly never entertained friends, preferring his club, a good restaurant, or better still, their own houses. This he admitted with an engaging frankness when pressed by the setting for an invitation.

"What do you want to come to my squalid little flat for? It's much nicer here!"

His flat wasn't squalid at all and he knew it; he had taken immense pains and spent a good deal of money over it, and the result was thoroughly satisfactory; but that is how he warded off all possible parties in his rooms.

Not one of Paul's women-friends had ever seen them, but rumours of old prints, Queen Anne furniture and a lacquer cabinet filled with Waterford glass reached them from various reliable sources. It was exasperating.

And then he asked Periwinkle to tea; and she accepted joyfully.

"Oh, Paul, what fun! Of course I'll come! Whom shall we ask? It's *my* party, remember; they're all to understand that!"

"No one's to be asked," he answered. "It's *our* party, just yours and mine."

"Oh," she said, and turned a lovely pink which Paul adored. Then she laughed.

"How disgustingly selfish of us! When we both know how that beloved Anne and Sybil and Madeleine—to say nothing of Mrs. Gussie—are dying to

come! No, no, we must certainly have them, Paul, especially Anne."

"I don't want them," he replied serenely. "I love them but I don't want them, Periwinkle. I only want you. Will you come?"

"I—I'll think about it," she answered.

"Tuesday's a good day," he continued affably, "there's nothing in the courts for me on Tuesday."

"If there were, you'd chuck me, I suppose," she said. And he answered simply, "I'd have to, my dear."

"Or a new story coming," she went on. "I actually believe you'd put me off—provided I said I'd come, which I haven't, *nota bene*—for a new story!"

"There *is* one coming, *nota bene;* what's more, I'm *harassed* about it, I ought not to be thinking about anything else. I'm stuck in the big love-scene, Periwinkle! And I don't care a damn! All I care about is your coming to tea on Tuesday."

"Mother'd be so shocked, Paul. *Do* let's have Anne!"

"Next time, perhaps," he answered quite firmly. "This time, no! Will you come, Winkle?"

"Yes, Paul," said Periwinkle meekly. There was a funny little chirp in her voice as she spoke, she wondered if he had noticed it.

III

She came in quickly, a little shyly and stood in the middle of the room looking about. Paul suddenly remembered he had meant to get some flowers. Her first words broke the thin skim of atmospheric ice with true Periwinkle dash.

"Well, of all the pigs! *What* a sweet place!"

She looked at Paul severely.

"Anne shall know of this!" she announced.

She moved towards the Waterford glass, aloof and sparkling on its shelves.

"And you never wanted us—never missed us!"

"I know now how I've missed you," he answered, "it's wonderful having you here."

He pushed a big chair towards the fire.

"Sit down, you darling Winkle."

"Paul, you *are* the most artistically selfish human being I ever dreamed of! I'm going to take off my hat so that I can lean back and tell you what I really think of you."

"Isn't it a new hat?" he asked with reverent interest.

"*New?*" she echoed. "Why, Paul, I saw that bird of Paradise hatch out of its little French hat-box one hour ago! It's just arrived from Paris! I bought it on my way here! It gave me a great courage, Paul, which Heaven knows I needed when that sinister elevator-girl asked me which floor."

They both contemplated the hat solemnly.

"Bon jour!" said Paul, and placed it respectfully on a fat black satin cushion trimmed with purple chenille and a large bunch of turquoise-blue pears.

"How well my cushion looks, doesn't it?" remarked Periwinkle. "Are the pears very uncomfortable?"

"They haven't complained about anything," said Paul and drew up a little stool close to her chair.

He sat down and laid his head upon her knees simply and naturally. She let him, of course. One always let Paul do these things. Anne had been dropped from the visiting list of three old friends of her father's because Paul had put his head on her shoulder at a dinner-party. But Anne didn't mind in the least.

"They don't know Paul," was her only comment, "and their dinners were a pain anyway."

"Do you think Mr. Sturgis will ever marry?" she had been asked meaningly, after this particular dinner, by one of the shocked ladies who had seen Paul's head, and Paul always claimed that her answer was what caused her name to be erased from the three lists, much more than what he had done to her shoulder! "If one of our husbands dies, he may," Anne said calmly.

Paul's head felt very nice on Periwinkle's knees. His hair was turning grey at the temples, she noticed. How thick it was, how good it smelled. Periwinkle had a curious desire to stroke it. She began to talk lightly of his old prints and the green and white Wedgwood plates running about the room on a little shelf.

"If mother divorces me for coming here to-day, I think I'll marry you for the sake of those darling old plates," she reflected.

"I wish you would; and I'll give you the plates for a wedding present. Will you marry me, Winkle?"

"No, Paul," said Periwinkle.

"How unkind," he sighed in relieved tones and put his head on her knees again.

"And as I see no signs of tea," she continued, "I'm going to ask for a cigarette to deaden the pangs of hunger."

Paul rose with evident reluctance.

"I was *so* comfortable!" he grumbled, "I wish you wouldn't be so restless!"

He gave her a cigarette and lit one for himself.

"How's the big love-scene?" she asked, and blew an expert little ring towards him. "There's a wedding-ring for it!"

Paul groaned.

"They're still floundering about!" he said. "Such a good situation, too! *I* don't know what's the matter with those two people—I simply *can't* make them kiss! They just stand there staring at each other like two fools!"

"*Must* they kiss?" she asked with interest.

"Of course they must!" he cried, looking at her with reproachful eyes.

"But they *won't!* They go on making page after page of ridiculous conversation; I'm sick of them both!"

She looked at him.

"Perhaps it isn't their fault," she said gently, "poor things!"

Paul thought deeply for quite half a minute.

"You mean it's mine," he answered. "Perhaps you're right. I—I have a horror of the melodramatic and lovers are always so melodramatic!"

"And if they are not—they 'stick'!" remarked Periwinkle. "You've read too much Henry James, my friend."

Paul crossed over to the writing table. He opened the drawer and took out his manuscript with great deliberation.

"I think I'll read it to you, Winkle. It's a thing I never do—I hate doing! I don't like criticism—it depresses me! And I certainly never court it. But I'm going to read you the whole darned story—as far as I've gotten. Be as patient—and as kind—as you can!"

There was a glint of two big steel buckles as she crossed her feet comfortably on the stool.

"Read on, Macduff!" she said gaily. "I'm *so* happy, dear Macduff! Oh, Paul, I'm having a divine time, and I love being read to!"

IV

It was an involved little story and Periwinkle found it difficult to concentrate upon the plot that seemed to drift like smoke about the characters. Her ear kept wandering to Paul's voice, which took on curious tones and undertones as he read; she liked his intent grey eyes, the whimsical lift of his upper lip, the slim brown hands. Her mind darted in and out of the flow of words like an uneasy humming-bird.

Paul read steadily on. Oh, it wasn't good, it wasn't *any* good, the story! Periwinkle was filled with a kind of panic as she listened. He had told her quite frankly that he didn't like criticism—and she knew what happened when Paul didn't like anything—she was sure, too, that he would see through any forced praise—that dear, dear, over-sensitive Paul! And she began to realize just how dear he was to her.

What should she do? What should she say to him?

"Mother would pronounce this a divine judgment on me for having come," she thought. And now Paul was reading the "big love-scene."

It flashed across her suddenly that she could write this story herself—and much better—she saw so plainly what was wrong, just how she would have built up that toppling structure into swift, sure words!

"And that's all," said Paul, and put the manuscript back into the drawer of the writing-table.

Periwinkle noticed that there was a clock somewhere very near; she had never heard a clock breathe in such a strident, noisy, insistent way, she wondered how Paul could stand it—And the next minute she was in his arms.

She was in his arms and strangely, wonderfully glad to be there; they closed around her like two great gates, shutting out the world of little things that she never wanted to play with any more.

And through the divine unreality of what she knew was a truth still more divine, she listened to a voice against her cheek, Paul's voice that she had always loved so, telling her of his love for her, in abrupt, tender absurd little words that made her even more utterly his.

"Oh, Winkle, darling—we love each other! And we didn't know it! We've fooled about all this time! And we love each other! *Don't we?*"

"Yes, Paul, we love each other."

"Put your arms around me, dear. We adore each other—and we *didn't know it!* Say we adore each other, Winkle!"

"Yes, Paul—we adore each other."

And at last they grew braver and looked into each other's faces, and there they found the light that led them groping, blinded by its brightness, to each other's lips.

Then, as swiftly as she was lifted to the stars, was Periwinkle dashed to earth again.

"The big scene!" said Paul, "I've got it, Winkle! I know how to write it now! Those blessed lovers—I know just what was wrong with them!"

V

She had forgotten all about the story. The foolish, badly-written little story! *But Paul had not!* And he was going to write about this miracle—*their* miracle that they had found together—he was going to publish it in a magazine, for anyone to read! Visions of news-stands at the Grand Central Station, at the Ritz-Carlton, at Lexington Avenue and Forty-Second Street, rows and rows of magazines all telling of their love, of her and Paul's great love, rose like a hideous mirage in the stretching desert in which she stood, a mournful traveller, alone. He still held her close.

"How wonderful everything is going to be!" he was saying, and she thought, "I'm dead, broken into little pieces—and he doesn't even know it."

"You see, you darling Winkle, I've always loafed through life, everything was a joke. But now—I love you—kiss me, kiss me— And then we'll ring up Anne and ask her to the wedding!"

What happened after that was always unclear, she could never visualize it in her thoughts. She remembered laughing a high-pitched, ghastly little laugh that seemed to do something to his face, she remembered pushing him away, both hands against his breast, on which she lay no longer; *somebody* said—was it she?—it *must* have been, obviously, but what had happened to her voice? "Our honeymoon will make a lovely story, won't it? *Any* magazine would publish it, I should think!" Again that horrid cackling laugh. "*No, Paul!* You've got the 'big scene'—for one silly little story—they know *how to kiss now*, those blessed lovers! That's enough, I guess—"

She never knew how she found her way to the street—she had a curious recollection of throwing her Paradise-bird hat out of the taxi window and thinking that he would probably have put that into a story, too—

He had called to her as she slipped

through the door, "If you leave me like this, I swear I'll never forgive you!"

And she had answered, "That's a good line for a parting scene!"

VI

THE setting saw little of Paul during the next weeks. And then he telephoned to Anne that he was coming to tea, and arrived with a book of somebody's new poems which he read very beautifully and made brilliant fun of, after a formidable "stinger," Anne-mixed, four large slices of chocolate-cake and countless cigarettes.

He played with the baby, inquiring anxiously why it didn't walk yet, and was Anne *sure* it wasn't paralyzed, which worried her a little for hours afterwards—passionate mother that she was—although she knew it was nonsense; and he insisted upon taking a goldfish out of the Japanese garden, in order to prove that the fluff on top of the baby's head was exactly the same shade of pink-gold, winning his point triumphantly, although at the expense of Anne's best goldfish.

He also made a bet with Sybil, who had been hastily summoned by telephone, to the effect that she would never get her cook back from her sister, to whom she was lent for a dinner-party, the bet consisting of Sybil's platinum and diamond wedding-ring against his dyeing his hair any colour she chose.

"Paul was great to-day," said Anne after he had gone, "but I don't think he's looking well. And he's drinking too many cocktails—although I love him to have them *here* if he *must* have them at all. What a pity Periwinkle is in Atlantic City! Did I tell you I got a handsome post-card of the boardwalk from her the other day?"

"I wonder if Paul is in love with anybody?" remarked Sybil thoughtfully. "He looked just like that when he was running about with Annabel Azore two winters ago—you remember Annabel, and her wonderful trained seals, don't you, Anne?"

"Of course I do; that's the only story of Paul's I ever really liked."

"I wonder if Annabel did?" Sybil rose as she spoke and picked up her muff and gloves. "I do think he ought to buy you a new goldfish. The Japanese garden looks like Asbury Park without it!"

"But he won't," sighed Anne ruefully, "and it cost me five dollars! What colour do you intend dyeing his hair? *Do* let me dye it for you, Sybil! You know what a success I made of the baby's winter coat, and I've got heaps of green left over."

VII

AND then it came!

"You have sent us a very unusual story," wrote the sub-editor of the *Best Monthly*, "and one that gives us much pleasure in publishing. We are including it in our April number. Trusting that you will give us an early opportunity," etc., etc.

Paul read the sub-editor's letter three times. It was an immense comfort to him. A very unusual story!

"It ought to be!" he thought to himself grimly.

Periwinkle—Periwinkle! He had laid his face across the pages of the "big scene" as he re-wrote it—he wasn't sure, but he believed he had wept a little—it was so like her!

He had lost her; she would never come back, he knew; and his face wore the aloof look the setting dreaded so, as he reflected that he *did not want her back*. "Your silly little story!" Well, he had the sub-editor's letter to apply to the smart of that, and he was grateful to her in a way, for it was thanks to those ever-remembered words, and to what had come before—remembered, too—that he had had the energy to rewrite the whole story, a thing he had never troubled to do in all his life, and which had certainly improved it enormously.

Still, he did not want her back! She had hurt him too much. He had been intensely relieved to hear that she had left town and he had not seen her since that miserable day. Something of her

lingered for weeks about the room. It was not her perfume—he did not know *what* it was—but it drove him to the club-bar too often. He thanked God, he reflected whimsically, that he had not bought a tea-set to remind him of her all his life!

"We wouldn't have been happy together," he kept saying to himself, until it became a kind of parrot-cry squawking at him comfortingly, when the pain for her throbbed through his cold resentment. "Girls aren't human, anyway."

He used to lie awake in the dark repeating over and over to himself, "We wouldn't have been happy together!"

He wondered if she would see the story. Oh, hell—he didn't care!

VIII

THE April number of the *Best Monthly* arrived the last days of March. It had a wonderful cover, all daffodils, and a girl in a blue sweater standing among them, daffodil-coloured hair flying in a vividly depicted spring breeze.

Paul's heart beat more quickly as his fingers stumbled over the crisp pages. There it was, "The Big Scene"—yes, he had called it that. He read his name with the unfailing accompanying thrill, he read the story straight through, almost solemnly, an anxious eye on the outlook for possible typographical errors.

When he had finished he smiled, a little wanly. It *was* an "unusual story," the editor of the *Best* was right. God, how sweet Periwinkle was in print!

And suddenly a great longing for her surged through him. He remembered how she had clung, all the warmth of her body glowed against him again, thawing the frozen misery that had chilled his heart all those long weeks. He seemed to hear her voice, the breathless, happy little voice: "Yes, Paul, we adore each other!"

He got up from his chair, something capitulated unconditionally within him; he would go to her, kneel to her, implore her to be as she had been when she said, "Yes, Paul, we adore each other!"

What if she refused to see him, what if she were not at home?

He decided that he would telephone. He hated being told that people were not at home; it irritated him; he felt snubbed as he turned away from their closing doors. He couldn't bear Periwinkle not being at home! He must be sure, too, that she would be glad to see him.

He felt a little dizzy as he waited at the telephone. "I'm telephoning Fate," he thought. "I'm telephoning the gods. I'm telephoning Periwinkle!" What a good poem that would make, free-verse of course!

Yes, she was at home. Could he speak to her—never mind about the name; a friend wanted to speak to her.

There was a pause, he heard somebody talking a long way off, somebody whistling, beating a carpet—no, that was his own ridiculous heart—

"Hello! Who is it? This is Miss Middleton, yes—"

And then a strange thing happened. The four walls of his cosy room seemed to topple apart, the earth swung clear of him, and Paul hung in mid-air, clutching the telephone as one would cling to a swaying, creaking branch over an abyss. And something seemed to call from the depths, "Hang up the receiver, you fool! *Or jump!*"

"*Hello—hello—this is* 2624—" It was Periwinkle's voice—and the little chirp was in it—but Paul hung up the receiver.

In one flashing moment of complete self-revelation he realized that he didn't want to speak to her, didn't dare to speak to her. He was afraid of her and all that it would mean if he spoke! He was afraid for his comfortable, self-centred life, his happy-go-lucky, perfectly irresponsible life in the little flat that he had made exactly what he wanted it to be. He didn't want to give it up, to give *anything* up—not even for the bliss of Periwinkle—he didn't want to change, to share—*he didn't want to marry!*

"Your silly little story!" And her face as she said it! He put his hand up to his forehead; it felt wet and he felt faint and sick. With an effort he got up and crossed over to the writing-table, pulled a brandy-flask out of a drawer, put it to his lips, drained it.

"Good God!" he said aloud. A great loneliness came over him all of a sudden and with the loneliness a great longing for Anne.

He would go to her, put his head on to her knee, smoke a thousand cigarettes, drink a thousand stingers. Perhaps he would read her "The Big Scene." He realized perfectly that Anne didn't think much of his stories, but she'd have to like "The Big Scene." It was the best thing he had done and Anne would be the first to see that—dear, clever Anne! He would buy her the biggest bunch of daffodils he could carry and lay them, together with the daffodil-covered *Best*, in her lap, without a word.

"She'll probably drop dead," he thought as he reached for his coat. "I've never done such a thing to Anne, but it's a nice little gesture. Besides, I owe her something for the goldfish. I believe Anne was fond of that goldfish—and I'm fond of Anne."

As he opened the outer door of his flat the telephone rang, long and insistently. Without looking round, he passed out and closed the door behind him.

"We wouldn't have been happy together," he announced to anyone who chose to hear as he ran down the long flights of stairs to the street. He wouldn't ring for the elevator, the new girl got on his nerves; she *would* talk to him. He wished George, the pleasant coloured boy who stole things, hadn't been sent away.

THE INTOLERABLE SOLICITUDE

By Peter Macklin

HER tedious adherence to method killed him. She wrecked his life with her methodical attention to detail, her insistence that nothing should ever be out of place. Even in death he could not escape her. She put moth balls in his coffin.

THERE are two kinds of girls: pretty girls and those who stand in crowded street cars.

TWO men after a woman, tragedy; two women after a man, melodrama.

COVENTRY

By John Hamilton

I WONDERED why she had been sent to Coventry.

She did not drink sparkling wines that brightened her eyes or flushed her cheeks or made her giggle.

She did not blow faint circles of cigarette smoke through her soft carmine lips.

She did not swear like the foreman of a printing office when her maid pricked her with a pin.

She did not narrow her amethyst eyes when she looked at men.

She did not tell shadowy stories that left one breathless.

She did not pawn her pearls and sapphires to pay bridge losses.

But all her friends did.

BETRAYAL

By Louis Untermeyer

IT was cold that night by the lake,
  Something, I knew, was wrong
Though I whistled and tried to make
  The ends of a broken song.

Our footsteps crunched like a bite
  On leaves where the frost was strewn.
There was something false in the light
  Of that tarnished disc of a moon.

Like a rusty shield it hung
  Over a freezing abyss,
Cold as my heart when you clung
  And wounded me there with a kiss.

Then it grew light. I saw ships
  Huddling with frozen spars,
Your tell-tale eyes and your lips,
  And a sky that was stabbed with stars.

SPRING

By G. Ranger Wormser

I

HE was all in; horribly tired. Not that being tired was anything peculiarly new to him. He found he was tired most of the time. He could not get away from the draining, obtruding insinuation of the stupor.

In the early morning when he first awoke he was conscious of an overwhelming fatigue, of a lethargic dulness, of a deadening weighted sense of druggedness. When he went to bed at night he was worn out: completely, sickeningly exhausted. During the day he forgot about the thing in the monotonous habitual concentration on his work. Still, if there were a sudden need arising unexpectedly for an unaccustomed exertion, he knew quite irrevocably before he attempted it that he was too utterly done up even to try. He hated shirking. But he could not combat the strained, prostrating lassitude which kept on catching at him. Of late he had wondered; speculating in contemptuous listlessness as to the other men in the office. He did not altogether understand how they could fail to realize what was breaking him, shattering him, smothering him. He was terribly, ashamedly afraid of their discovery.

He did not particularly care for these men who worked with him day in and day out the year around. He had no actual interest in any one of them. His attitude toward them all was unvaryingly of phlegmatic unconcern. He felt they existed. He spoke to them when he had to. He knew nothing of them. He did not want to know anything about them. They were shadows to him, shadows which had always been outside of him, shadows whose reality ended for him in their bodily substance. The power of an individual mind, of a live consciousness was obliterated, smeared ruthlessly from his possible recognition in that hypnotic, vicarious fatigue.

He had a vague unvisualized idea of the distribution of the office furniture. He had practically the same conception of the men. There was a desk directly in front of his desk. Tirard sat at that desk. At the further end of the long room were the three great windows. Parsons had his own corner under those windows. When he looked out of the uncurtained panes of glass at the flat blue sky, at the ridges of the red, grey-cindered roofs of the tall buildings huddling unevenly on one another with their black tin funnelled chimneys and their rounded rising water tanks, he had got a fleeting impression of Parsons. His eyes rested on Parsons when they came back from the cliff-like sheerness of the edifices below him and beyond him; from the thin etched outlines of the bridges swinging taut and sharp on the horizon; from the monstrous haze-softened gas towers and the wreathing volumes of the spreading smoke. For a long time now he had thought dimly, indefinitely that Parsons had seemed very tired. He had thought it with a latent cunning.

He supposed rather indifferently that the work itself was tediously wearing. He had never done any work other than this same office routine. He had spent his whole life stolidly perfecting himself in the systematized, careful schedules of his employment. He had al-

ways known he was best fitted for that sort of business. He would have lacked the energetic initiative for anything else. He knew it in a stupid, uncaring way. He had got so that he could not conceive a vitalized impulse. It hurt the dense stagnation of him to try to conceive it. It made him ill to imagine an active, rousing impetus. The stilled, dumbed mind of him balked at the thought of a spontaneous, voluntary decision.

If he had ever had an ambition to be more successful than he was, if he had held a positive appreciation of achievement before he had become steeped in the pressing heaviness of the exhaustion, he had long ago denied it. He prided himself primarily on his clear-headedness. He had realized years before that it took a big man to fill a big position. He had never for a moment thought of himself as a big man.

His head ached fearfully. He had been wanting for quite a while to go to an oculist. He had not found the opportunity. Sundays were the only days he had to himself. He would not give up his Sundays. He liked to lie in bed Sundays. He liked to doze all day in a light, undreaming unconsciousness. He encouraged the inert stupefaction, the paralyzing insensibility, the dulled, suspended sense of not having to feel how tired he was.

Walking along the side street, he tried to think back over his day at the office. He was not capable of the effort of thought. The formative faculty essential to establish a relative concreteness had decayed completely. No one thought of his could stand by itself. Without ever attaining a quality of distinctness it dwindled off into grotesquely unintelligible confusion. His brain was perplexedly crowded with incomprehensible vagueness. His process of thinking was peculiarly unassembled. He groped perpetually in innumerable blinded directions; without tangible reasoning, without the power to subconsciously plant a thought to develop its own culmination.

There was never anything to stimulate his mind. His mind was flaccidly numb, unresponding in its ponderous stupor, blunted in its enervating quiescence. He could not think. There was nothing sufficiently impressed on the laxed surface of his brain; nothing to which he could hang his thoughts. That day had been the same as countless other days. Had he wanted to remember he could not have managed it. There was nothing to stick out from the blank, unmeaning rotation. Nothing which could escape the enveloping saturation of the stifling weariness.

II

He went down the steps of the areaway which led him into the Italian restaurant where he took his dinner every night.

Luigi met him in the narrow, badly-lighted hall. Luigi met him each evening at exactly the same spot.

Through the open doorway he could see the closely packed room with the small, jammed-in tables. He had an unregistered apprehension of a large mass of heads. The glow from the scant electric bulbs trickled down on to numberless faces. There was the rushing clatter of hurriedly handled china. A hum of conversation droned undistinguishably, unabating in its protracted drumming. An opaque cloud of tobacco smoke coiled itself spirally upward, to hang motionlessly against the low ceiling.

He had told himself several times that he must find some other place to dine. He did not like the throngs of people. He did not like the incessant noise, the thick smell of food which nauseated him, the impatient scurrying which never stopped. He kept on coming. It was quite involuntary. He had not the necessary resolution to look about for another place.

"Meester Shannan, I am sorry!" Luigi took his hat and coat from him. "If you will not mind, Meester Shannan, I can give you your table as usual.—But with two others there already.—*Mio Dio!*—That fool of a Gio-

vanni!—He did not think it was *your* table.—I am desolate, Meester Shannan!—The restaurant it is full.—You will not mind for to-night, Meester Shannan?"

He was conscious of a sudden irritation. He felt Luigi knew quite well that he did mind. He could not understand why Luigi should take it upon himself to suppose he would not mind having others at his table. He resented that. He was thoroughly offended at Luigi for taking advantage of his tiredness.

"It doesn't matter;" he heard his own voice saying it stupidly. "I'll stay."

He watched Luigi drape his hat and coat among the many hats and coats festooning the rack.

He had known right along he would stay. He rather thought Luigi knew he would stay. He could not help suspecting every one of knowing his secret. He would not have been at all astonished to learn that Luigi banked cannily on the fact of his being too fagged out to go to another place to eat.

He followed Luigi through the crooking way between the chairs and tables.

When Luigi stopped, he stopped.

He heard a woman's voice:

"Now, really, Johnnie, you don't have to tell *me!*—With half an eye—"

He sank wearily into the chair which Luigi pulled out for him. His shoulders sagged. His legs sprawled nervelessly under the table. His hands lay palms upwards on his knees. His chin went down to his chest.

The woman's voice was broken off abruptly.

Luigi filled his glass with water.

He sat looking at the glass. Very slowly, very gradually he reached for it. He swallowed a lot of the water gratefully. His throat was burning. The room was hot; stuffy. Out in the street he had felt confusedly that it was growing warm.

"Didn't know;" the man spoke gruffly. "Didn't know you couldn't have a table to yourself."

"Hush, Johnnie!—He'll hear you!"

"I should worry!—He looks dopy, anyway!"

"Hush, Johnnie!"

He was too worn out to care. What people thought of him was of little importance. He was not surprised that the man had seen his irking exhaustion. He never thought he could hide it.

He pulled a newspaper from his pocket. He began to read. He stifled a yawn with the back of his hand. A sharp pain stabbed itself through his eyeballs. The print jumbled together in thin, hairy, black-spotted lines. He closed his eyes for a second. He opened them. He looked up. He saw the man and the girl sitting opposite him.

His glance wavered apathetically over the girl's face. She was young. He had seen hundreds of the same type of woman in the streets and the cars and the subway. He did not try to make out what she looked like. He had never known any women well. He had never wanted to know any women. She was smiling at the man. The whiteness of her teeth showed between the red edges of her lips. He lowered his eyes. He had scant concern for any one.

He became aware of the waiter standing at his side.

"You can bring me the regular dinner," he said.

He made an elaborate pretence of reading his newspaper. He carefully avoided glancing at the man and the woman opposite. They did not interest him. No one ever interested him. To become interested in any one meant the making of a definite exertion; doing away with that sapping tiredness. He could not do that. He was too entirely suffocated by the throttling, strangling weariness that gripped him potently.

The waiter brought his loaded tray.

He ate slowly; mechanically.

Now and again he caught a fragment of the conversation of those two people across the table.

"Johnnie, dear—"

"I wouldn't have asked her, Honeygirl.—I wouldn't ever want to run

around with her.—I'll take you every time.—All you've got to do is say the word, Hon—"

"D'ye mean it, Johnnie?"

He tried not to hear. He chewed hard at his food. He could not understand how people could talk and eat at the same time. He pushed his plate back. He motioned to the waiter.

"I'm silly about you, Honey.—You know that; don't you?"

"I like to hear you say it, Johnnie.—You can guess the way I feel."

"The way I do?"

"Well—"

Their words kept on going around and around him. The sound of their words beat on his eardrums. Their talk was to him a part of the loud noise of the restaurant, a part which vibrated a bit nearer to him than the rest of the racket.

"It's good to be alive, Honey!"

"Good, Johnnie?— It's glorious!—That's what it is!"

He was not hungry.

While the waiter changed his plate he stared straight before him.

The man's hand was lying close on the girl's fingers.

He looked away; his gaze going consciously about the room.

"Meester Shannan, is everything all right?"

His eyes turned to meet Luigi's.

"I'll have my check," he said wearily.

"But, Meester Shannan! — Your cheese—"

He protested feebly:

"I don't want it, Luigi."

"You shall have it, Meester Shannan!—You *must* have it, Meester Shannan!—Santa Maria!—I will not listen for one little moment that you do not take your cheese, Meester Shannan!"

He let Luigi put the cheese in front of him. He toyed at it with his fork. His brows drew themselves together in a faint wrinkling frown. The fork was heavy.

"Is it not good, Meester Shannan?"

He ate some of it indifferently. He ate it because Luigi stood there watching. It was easier to eat than to find an excuse for not eating. He saw Luigi go off to another table smiling broadly.

The waiter brought him his check. He paid it. He sat stolidly waiting for his change. When it came he automatically counted it, tipping the waiter the usual amount and pocketing the rest.

In the hall he took his hat and coat from the rack.

III

Out in the street he wandered aimlessly up town. It was growing dark. The asphalt stretched greyly under the brilliant, high-swung corner lamps. Through the curtained windows of the houses spotted the yellow glowing lights; gleaming, evened patches squaring themselves regularly on the gloom darkened walls. The thick vacancy of the deserted shops ranged on either side of the avenue. And now and again a glittering display burst unhidden on the shrouding evening; its splendour splashing vividly into the neutral dimness.

He always went about purposelessly before going to his room. He thought the air did him good. He thought bewilderedly that his room was crammed with the tiredness which stayed on him. He liked to imagine in that unreasoning ineffectual manner of his that the wideness of the night held more space for him and for the burden of his weariness.

It was a part of his regulated programme to walk around for an hour after his dinner. He never got very far. And he never reached home later than ten o'clock. His fatigue, dogging his footsteps, drove him finally forcibly into the compressing confines of his four walls, compelling him inexorably to the small, unescapable room. He never got back without the shackling sense of defeat; the imprisoned feeling of the weariness coming together and harrying him; of it plaguing him torturingly as it contracted on him from

the walls and the ceiling with all its relentless power.

He turned in at the entrance of the park.

There was a still, brooding hush blocking itself hugely between the earth and the sky. A languid immobility had fastened on to the profound layers of shadows. An unexpected warmth emanated drowsily out of the deep blue gloom. An intangible softness slurred itself, spreading smoothly on the quieted atmosphere.

His footsteps slackened unconsciously. He unbuttoned his coat. His shoes were suddenly heavy.

He found an unoccupied bench well away from the light.

He sank down on it.

Quite hazedly he began to wonder if the thing were actually getting worse. He had not thought of it as growing. The idea of it growing, of it becoming even more virulent was ghastly, staggering. There was no denying that tonight he was terribly, horridly tired.

He sat on the bench motionless. There was a strained fixity to his attitude, a rigidness that was wooden.

Overhead the slanting reach of the dark skies. All about him the bluish shadows massed in stillness. A languidness was tangled in the air. The night was full, trembling with a yearning intensity, a lurking wistfulness. It welled over him.

For no reason at all he felt his eyes blinded by a hot rush of tears. He tried to think what would happen when he became too tired. He was afraid of being too tired. If he became too tired he would not be able to go on with his work. There was nothing in his life but his work. There had never been anything else in his life. He had not thought the lack of anything else mattered. He wondered if death could be pulled on him by that terrible weariness. He wondered if death would mean rest. He could not create the thought of rest. Rest to him was nothingness. Life to him was nothingness. The only live thing which he could recognize was the oppressive fatigue which had seared itself into him.

All through the night that throbbing, attacking sense of a desperate want!

A woman had come and had sat down on his bench. He became gradually conscious that he was no longer by himself. He realized that a woman was sitting at the further end of the bench. He did not look at her. He had wished to be alone.

For a second he thought of getting up and walking off. He uncrossed his legs. His feet felt as if they were weighted. He did not move.

A faint, sweet tang of perfume came to him.

His nostrils dilated. His eyes, staring straight before him, went darting fearfully into the darkness on all sides of him. His gaze strove frenziedly to penetrate the thick, loose blackness. There was panic in his rapid glances; an extraordinary panic had flashed itself on to the unquickened mind of him.

The scent crept across his face. He sniffed at it. His eyes, straining at the filmy obscurity were seeking the source of that which he had sensed. The intangible longing, the pulsing breathlessness, the inexplicable restlessness. The anxious keen hankering that kept on coming stealthily, surreptitiously at him!

He glanced at the woman out of the corners of his eyes.

She sat there an undefined figure, blurred over by the greyness of the shadows.

He cleared his throat.

He crouched himself tightly at his end of the bench.

He realized then that he had almost spoken.

He had never spoken to a woman without an introduction. He never expected to speak to a woman without being properly introduced. It was not the sort of thing he did. It was not the sort of thing he ever meant to do.

His eyes went involuntarily to that quiet form. The mysterious, gloom-soaked body of her. He peered intently, trying to bring together the outlines

that had been softly obliterated by the smudging darkness. His eyes sought the invisible, shadow-smirched spot of her face. He wanted to see her face. He wanted that quite frantically.

A quick excitement flared to him. A rising, stirring wroughtness seethed in him.

It was idiotic to think of speaking to her. But he could not get the thought out of his head. It raced on sensuously; uncontrolled and clamorous. It would not do any harm. Just to say a word to her. Anything would really do. He could not understand what he was thinking of.

It was warm. He pulled his eyes away from the woman. He made himself look about him.

A clump of trees traced the spread of their branches on the low sky. The faint smell of the earth rose up mistily from the ground. The darkness, the expectant hush, the enveloping, seductive yearning.

A tumultuous nostalgia shook him. A wave of desire crept out of the night; worming itself distractingly, deliriously into his brain. His stupefied senses palpitated; reeling crazedly into alertness. He found that he was trembling.

His gaze crept back wistfully to the silent movement of the woman's two hands. He could see the ungloved white patches of them closing palely on to each other. He did not know until he felt the painted surface of the bench planks under his fingers that his hands had gone fumbling toward her.

He slumped rigidly against the back of the bench. His fists clinched themselves in his pockets.

Far off in the sky he could see flaring electric lights. The stream of them shot scintillating, quivering luridly into the high black smoothed horizon.

He could not realize what was happening to him. He felt the blood pouring over his cheeks, stinging up into his forehead. His heart-beats were hammering loudly, thumpingly in his temples. The deafening noise of them filled his ears. His lips were dry, burning. He closed his eyes in a sudden fainting dizziness. Against the background of their lids he saw the grey mass of that quiet, shadow-blurred figure. He felt his hands growing hot.

He wondered if she were tired. He wondered if she would understand what it meant to be tired. He wondered if she knew that he was there. If she could know that strange, compelling longing which had come so stunningly to him.

The night was throbbing with that incomprehensible need. The soft insistent impulse of it swept to him and over him and came on again. The poignant, thrilling beat of it rising and descending from the mat of the thickened shadows. The famished craving that vibrated furiously in the blackness.

He stared at her. He wanted to see her face. He was desperately eager for the sight of it.

He saw her get to her feet.

He rose from the bench, swaying for a moment, straightening himself tensely.

He watched her moving off down the ghostly line of the asphalt walk.

He followed her at a short distance.

Once she paused. He stopped, thinking that she knew he was there after her. Thinking that she might perhaps turn her head. Thinking that he would catch a glimpse of her face. She did not seem conscious of him. And then she went on and his footsteps echoed the tapping of hers.

At the entrance of the park she turned down town.

He followed her.

The fear of missing her came on him cruelly. His breathing was harsh, hurting him. Sweat stood out on his brow, trickling down into his wide, fixed eyes.

The stream of the lights after the dusk of the park bewildered him.

He thought she had gone when, crossing a street, a taxi came tearing between them. He hurried to come upon her heels a moment later.

He never took his gaze from the thin, moving form of her.

People passed him on all sides. He did not see them. Voices came to him,

disembodied. He hardly heard. Words floated at his eardrums, disconnected, drifting on by him.

He wanted to see her face.

A man jostled him.

"What time—?"

"Eleven—"

He stood stock still.

"Eleven—"

He had had no idea that it was so late. He could not conceive how he had so forgotten the hour. He felt suddenly tired, nauseatingly wearied. His whole body ached with fatigue.

He remained there motionless.

His eyes, going hungrily before him, followed after that thin, mysterious moving figure.

He saw then that she had stopped. He saw her turn quickly, glancing behind her. He felt her unseen eyes. He thought that through the vague night he glimpsed the white oval of her face.

He watched her walk on. He watched the form of her dwindling away from him. He stood there seeing her go bodily, completely into the absorbing dimness that shut together after her.

He went back to his room.

He lay awake in his bed all that night, tossing, wondering. He could not understand. He knew he would never understand. He was too utterly tired to think. The weariness drenched thickly on to him, smothering him.

He was wide awake when morning came. He was conscious of the overwhelming fatigue, of the dulness of the deadening, weighted sense of druggedness.

IV

At his usual time he was in the office.

Sitting at his desk he looked out of the three great windows at the further end of the room, at the flat blue sky, at the ridges of the red, grey cindered roofs of the tall buildings huddling unevenly on one another, with their black, tin-funnelled chimneys and their rounded rising water-tanks. His eyes rested on Parsons when they came back from the cliff-like sheerness of the edifices below and beyond him; from the thin etched outlines of the bridges swinging taut and sharp on the horizon; from the monstrous, haze-softened gas-towers and the wreathing volumes of the spreading smoke.

Staring at Parsons, the pallid white oval of a face came hauntingly before him and was gone.

He could not see Parsons distinctly.

His eyes went stupidly, vaguely to Parsons' desk.

Parsons had filled a glass with water. Parsons had placed the glass in front of him.

In the glass were six long brown twigs that were winged on their slender stems with a faint sprouting greenness.

JEALOUSY is merely a woman's dislike that some other woman should have the pleasure of making the man she loves miserable.

THE extent of a wife's affections depends on the number of her husband's eligible friends.

HAWAIIAN MELODY

By Carl Glick

FROM far off came the drumming of the surf, and above was the music of the midnight stars. Under the palm-trees, indistinct and faint in the moon's glow he stood, singing. The melancholy strains of his ukelele beat a faint harmony with the tide.

Jeanette stole from the house—hesitant and timid. She paused by the balustrade of the garden. The singer came closer. . . .

She took the rose from her hair and threw it down to him. He grew bolder.

The poetry of romance and the longing for undefined mystery tempted Jeanette. . . .

"Who are you?" she whispered.

His reply was a love song. She still could not see him . . . but his music stirred in her forgotten memories.

Spellbound . . . entrapped by the beauty of his passion and the night, she said . . . "It seems as if we have met before. . . . Perhaps it was in ancient Egypt. I a Princess and you my soldier lover. . . . Or maybe from Troy you carried me back to Greece. . . . Or on a gondola in Venice we floated with the stars. . . . I know we have loved before." Her voice grew low and dreamy.

The music stopped abruptly. "Yes. . . . You know me. But I ain't never been in Egypt, or Troy, or Venice, miss. I'm the cook."

FINALITY

By May Greenwood

I BID you go, flinging the door of dreams
Wide to the night, where one low plant gleams.
Night's passion calls you, calls you to return.
My heart's door sways ajar, her tapers burn
To light you, stranger from her loveliness.
What stars they might have been you cannot guess,
But I shall mourn you, and through all my years.
Yet am I brave to live my life, to hold
That memory close, to robe me with its gold
And drain the chalice of its future tears.

THE SHOW-DOWN

By Martha Van Doren

I

SHE had said all the proper things and she had said them well. Not as well, he suspected, as she would later imagine herself having said them. Later she would incorporate into her portion of the conversation all manner of beautiful sentiments, beautifully expressed, and she would go over and over the scene pretending to herself to have said them all. She was always going over things: the more disagreeable they were the more she went over them. He had an idea that she would want to say good-bye to him many times, rising on each successive occasion to greater heights of emotion and finer finish of effect. Well, he would forestall that: once this was nicely over he would go away, as far away as possible, and stay until time for the final legal arrangements. Letters he thought he could endure.

She would be out of the room for a few minutes: she would want, she had said, that much time in which to prepare herself for their final parting. She wished it to be dignified, in keeping with their eight years of companionship. Then she had left the room with gently bent head and a tender mournfulness of dragging skirt and floating kimono sleeve which reminded him of the dignified restraint of a funeral procession on a Greek vase.

He hoped she wouldn't consider it necessary to kiss him. He felt that he couldn't quite stand one of her kisses. They had a certain ritualistic quality which he couldn't quite incorporate into his present state of mind. The ritualistic element wasn't less definite because it was mental—or, she would probably have said, spiritual. They were always the same, the kisses: they hadn't varied in eight years. Always they were tender, always virginal, always consecrated. And they were always moist. He didn't know why they were moist. He had observed carefully: he could see no cause for it. Possibly sogginess was the physical corollary of spiritual consecration. They weren't the kind of kisses one could reciprocate or even participate in: they were offered meekly and must be accepted reverently. He tried, tentatively, to compare them to Joyce's full-lipped passionate caresses and turned a little ill, as he had expected that he would.

Having determined to be very chivalrous, to follow all her cues, meet her at every point, he felt a sudden reaction which manifested itself in growing irritation with her. He commenced to resent the eight years of what he mentally termed their mutual endurance, and which she had referred to as a wonderful experience in perfect companionship. He tried to think of all her good qualities and all the disagreeable and irritating ones were thrust naked to the surface.

The breakfast table with the dried fruit and coarse wafers always put near her plate made him a little furious. Her unique dietary necessities had been thrust at him for eight years. One of the most amusing things about her had been the strange paradox of her pose of spirituality accompanied by this absorption in her physical needs: the careful selection of her foods and the periodical medicaments:—always fully discussed.

He wondered why she hadn't ordered

the breakfast things taken away: he could look unmoved on the grounds in the bottom of his own cup of black coffee but the gathering scum of amber cream on her half-empty cup disgusted him. With her genius for arrangement she should have realized that slices of toast with congealing butter on the surface and soiled plates and egg cups were not appropriate accompaniments to such a scene as this.

Almost and quite unreasonably it seemed that she should have managed a different setting entirely for the whole thing; that she should not have received and opened the letter just at this time. In so supremely well-ordered an existence as hers it was ridiculous that such a crisis should have arrived—at the breakfast table.

That she had been so beautifully prepared for it was no source of surprise. He was convinced that she was equally ready for any conceivable occurrence. Undoubtedly she had a neat and appropriate little speech all nicely rehearsed for use in the event of his own death. She not only rehearsed but she undoubtedly revised such speeches.

He reminded himself sharply that such thoughts were petty and unworthy of himself or her. He tried to force himself to think admiringly of her: he knew that she would expect him to think of her admiringly. After all, she had risen to this circumstance as well as any one could possibly expect. There would be no scandal; he knew that. The self-absorption that passes for good-breeding she had in a superlative degree; she would be too much interested in her own pose to trouble herself to be disagreeable to Joyce. She might even be kind to her in indirect ways. She would be if it seemed to her a becoming part to play. She would play her part perfectly and, with a little thrill of appreciation, he realized that she would play it out, uncomplainingly, to one spectator: herself. There was a tremendous dignity in such exalted egotism.

II

He knew, he had always known, that he could have had his liberty at any time to find out. She was that kind of woman: she conceived herself to have unalterable convictions regarding the sanctity of the home and a single standard of conduct, and he knew quite well that she had always longed for an opportunity to immolate herself. He knew her so well: he was convinced that, except for certain restraints that he had deliberately imposed on himself out of intellectual delicacy, he could read her every thought. Sometimes, for his own amusement, he had allowed himself to go farther into her mind than other times, and he knew that in many ways she would welcome this opportunity for martyrdom: that she would have welcomed it any time these eight years.

He had known it and he had been decent. Not even for Joyce's happiness and his own, which would be a natural consequence of Joyce's, had he relaxed his vigilance of deception. His conscience commended him on this score and did not condemn him in the matter of the necessity for deception. He had not harmed her; she had come to him chaste, so far as any reality was concerned she would leave him as she had come; her soul or what she conceived to be her soul was militantly sexless. He had never touched it.

She opened the door and stood framed in the opening for an instant, just long enough for him to see that she was pale and self-possessed. He knew that she wanted him to see that she was pale and self-possessed. Then she came in and closed the door behind her. There was an expression of exaltation on her well-cut, good-looking face; her delicate nose, her thin, mobile lips, her rather dull blue eyes.

Suddenly a sense of her unusualness came to him. Was it not just possible that, on the whole, she was of an immense superiority? Possibly he had been diabolically gifted with perceptions that picked out just those particular flaws that marred her particular

perfection. He had the feeling of one who has leaned too hard against a grated window which has seemed to restrict and scarify his outlook so that it gives way, when he suddenly discovers that it was his only protection from precipitation into endless and nightmare space.

Possibly after all she had been the best woman for him; maybe it was better that his somewhat temperamental nature, with its slightly abnormal sensibility to other people's mental attitudes, should be linked with this particularly simple because wholly artificial personality. It was the artificiality of a high degree of adaptation to civilized conditions. How would he re-order his life without her formal steadying influence? He had a momentary sense of panic, then the daring and gallantry and romance of it seized him; a wild exhilaration of danger, of mad flight without compass or signal; with nothing but a more or less steady port; Joyce's lips. Then she spoke.

"Harry."

"Yes." He answered gravely; he would play up to her but he hoped that she would make this part of it short.

"We have been very happy together."

"You have been a wonderful wife to me, Edna," he replied non-committally.

"You—you will miss me—our companionship, I mean."

"Yes, yes." He buried his face in his hands with strangely confused emotions. He was conscious of a desire to rise to certain expectations which he knew she was entertaining; he was conscious of an innate element of tragedy in the situation which imposed in spite of himself rules of its own and, quite overwhelmingly, he was conscious of an hysterical inclination to laugh. He *was* laughing; he could feel his shoulders shaking.

"Harry!"

"Yes." He was choking.

"I have thought of everything; of our life together, of the great wrong you have done me, of your repentance—"

He gave a little strangled ejaculation.

"—And—and, Harry, I have decided to forgive you."

With a cry of relief he snatched her to him:

"Oh! Edna, Edna, dear, thank God!" he sobbed.

THE TERROR

By Dennison Varr

HE walked into the shooting gallery, picked up an automatic pistol, snuffed out eight lighted candles in quick succession, played a double octave on the bell targets, pulverized a dollar and sixty-nine cents worth of clay pipes, and then meekly allowed the attendant to overcharge him.

FAITH is at the heart of happiness. How much every man's happiness depends upon his faith that the luck of his friends won't last!

THE SAILOR

By Henry Anderson

I HAVE a love in every port.

* * * * *

I am a sailor.

When I was a child I heard someone say: "A sailor has a love in every port."

I wished many beautiful women to love me.

I craved the love of a dainty maid from Burma.

I longed for a slim maiden of Gallipoli to smile at me.

I desired the broad smile of an Ethiopian woman.

I yearned for the touch of a fair-skinned lady of Helsingland.

My blood tingled for the caress of a vivacious Parisienne.

I wished many beautiful women to love me, so I became a sailor.

One day I married a thin haired, big hipped woman from Schenectady named Nellie.

* * * * *

I have a love in every port. . . .
Nellie follows me.

SHADOW-BOUND

By Hazel Hall

YOU whom the shadows beckoned
Long—so long ago
That the litanies you taught me
Now tremblingly and low
Fade on the lips that loved them
Long—O long ago.

Why have you stirred the silence
That flowered from my pain?
Just now your anxious footstep
Sounded above the rain;
Just now your eyes, beseeching,
Shadowed my window-pane!

THE QUEEN'S CHARIOT

By Mifflin Crane

I

IN her Latin-American country she was the subject of controversy and condemnation. Before she was sixteen, in the convent school, she disgraced herself by reading the books of Zola, of Voltaire, of Théophile Gautier. When liberated from this prison-house her infractious spirit seemed to blossom like a malign flower. She would not conform to the conventions of a woman's conduct. This was very unfortunate for her family, and for one of her position.

Especially, it hurt the aspirations of her father, who, from his position as Minister of War, was intriguing for the Presidency. She should have been his formidable ally; with a carmine flower in her midnight hair, with a jet fan to cover and uncover the allure of her smile, with a moment of suggestion in the glance of her unfathomable eyes, she could have won this man and that man to the paternal interest. But she quickly rejected the social life he planned for her. She would not dance, she would not sit in the box at the opera, she would not remain through the long dinners that began early in the evening and were not over until after midnight. People quickly ceased to include her in their invitations, partly through the discourtesy of her persistent refusals, partly because she was already scandalously breaking the rigidity of all their conventions.

She was seen walking with men on the streets, men of the Bohemia—the writers, the artists, the suspected revolutionists. Worse, she attended the government University, the only woman student in its history. Those in authority attempted to stop her studies, but they could find no law with which to thwart her; no lawmaker had ever dreamed this contingency. Even the students were outraged and rebelled against her presence, but they did not fathom the measure of her strength, of her will, of her determination; she ignored their jeers and once she frightened a small mob of them by pointing at them, held in an unwavering little hand, a small, gleaming revolver that she drew out from the concealment of her dress. She was unconquerable, as secure as an Olympian.

Yet there was no serenity in her spirit, for the restrictions of her environment, however much she defied them, ceaselessly irritated her, like the descending drop of maddening water in a chamber of antique torture. Sometimes, walking out alone in the early morning, she would draw in a deep breath of the early air—and feel then a tightness in her throat, in her chest, as if the muscles of respiration were restrained in some constricting garment. Here the air was not free, she could not breathe it with abandon. She was for ever engaged in a trivial battling, an opposing whose triumphs were meagre and unworthy her concern.

She wrested from the denials of her environment the right to know men freely, but they were never the men of her dreams; there was in them an insufficiency and a wanting that kept her heart unthrilled and unyielding and kisses the strangers of her lips. It almost seemed to her at last that no reality could show itself in the fine measure of her fancies; the real came

to her in shoddy clothing, whilst the garments of her dreams were engauded with colour and gold.

"My dreams," she said, speaking one day to a poet of her country, "are my best experiences. You tell me of this thrill and that thrill, and write about many pleasant things—but they are poor when I meet them; do you understand? My fancies are better than the most pleasant facts!"

Impelled by her dissatisfactions, she had long considered going to some place where the conditions of life would be more generous to her. Sometimes she thought of Paris, at other times of New York, and the freedom of both places delighted her imagination. She did not know, on the day she confessed the limitations of her realities to the poet Lameda how close she was drawing to her desire.

Her good fortune came about through the disgrace of Lameda himself. He was a decadent poet, a South American Baudelaire, with a pathological mind and morbid impulses. Moreover, he was no friend of the government. When the police discovered him in a certain obscene dereliction they joyfully put him away in a prison of a medieval character, fed him very scantily, did their utmost to degrade his spirit, that was like a fabric of subtle and numerous threads, whilst the government paraded his disgrace like a palpable trophy. Of course, they accomplished their purpose; they broke his pride and destroyed his health, and it was much too late when he was removed to the prison hospital and given the attention of a physician.

She heard that he was dying, and the news shocked her and stirred her with the utmost compassion. With a fine impulsiveness, she hurried to the infirmary, and at first the authorities were desirous of excluding her, but her connections made them fear an absolute refusal.

In company with a Charity Sister, white-robed and speechless, they finally let her see the dying poet. She found him gaunt, a pathetic ruin, a pallid, unresting face, set with two burning eyes against a white pillow. She was the first of all his former friends to come to him.

For a moment he stared at her in tragic surprise. She dropped to the bedside and took one of his nerveless hands in her own; she pressed his fingers tightly. Her touch dissolved all his restraint and he began to weep, soundlessly, in a last despair, in an acknowledgment of utter defeat that no barbaric cruelty had forced him to own; her pity was the instant solvent of his shell of concealment.

His tears brought her own and they dropped from her eyes and like a chrism touched his hands. The Charity Sister stooped and drew her away. Two nurses stood near and gaped.

The news of this episode was carried to her father's ears; he waited until the next day and then, after finishing his afternoon *siesta*, he sent one of the servants to call her to his study. She understood the summons, she guessed his purpose, and she went to him defiantly.

He was standing in front of a long, littered table when she entered the room. His smooth, yellow forehead glistened dully, his great, jetty moustache hung ponderously from his upper lips, concealing his mouth. His sleepy eyes glowed ominously beneath their drooping lids, like the premonitory and sinister glow within a dead crater.

For a moment they looked at each other without speaking.

"Pereira," he said, "perhaps you have some motive that I am unable to understand"—he spoke with a soft and intense sarcasm. "As I see it now, your purpose is simply to discredit and ruin me. The man was an enemy of the government, a dangerous fellow, an impudent cuckold that we were able, very fortunately, to put out of the way of all mischief. Moreover, he deserved his punishment.

"*Ay!*"

She hissed the exclamation at him bitterly, a sardonic, monosyllabic prod to the memory of his own sins. His eyes

opened a little, the lids dropped back again, he continued:

"It may be impossible for you to understand, Señorita, but my position toward all such people must be unequivocal. Know this: I feel no sympathy for them, but even if I did, it would be impossible for me to show it. Suspicion is almost the primary theme of our politics. By very trivial acts I could quickly lose the confidence of certain men who are quite necessary to me now."

His quiet manner vanished, like a light suddenly eclipsed. His eyes opened, he glared at her, he leaned forward and grimaced ferociously.

"What do you mean by it, Señorita?" he demanded. "What impudence! What folly! What disregard of your duty! My daughter visits the man for whose punishment I am responsible, a man whose name is unmentionable! What is to be supposed about me; what sort of an individual will this make me appear? What do you mean?"

She met his glare with her black brows lifted, her dark face contemptuous. She did not move; her hands were held in front of her, clasped tightly together.

"Yes, then I am undutiful," she said. "I'm anything you want to call me, Señor; that is now understood between us. What it pleases me to do doesn't please you; I am one person and you are another. I understand: I am a disgrace to you. Well, then, let me go away; send me away!"

"I'd be very pleased never to see you again," he replied, his voice once more quiet.

"That is an agreement, then," she instantly returned. "I shall go to New York. You make me very happy, Señor!"

They stood opposite each other, like a pair of diabolically courteous and eternal enemies. She experienced a thrill of immense gladness, like the emotions of one released from an intolerable confinement. She could be free at last; she had brought it about by her own act. A medley of possibilities, sensed only in glittering glimpses, passed before her eyes like a sudden lantern slide run swiftly across a screen. Her emotions sparkled like the scintillations of a rocket of a thousand swift fires. Now she was liberated!

II

She came to New York as one into a city of enchantment and wonder. Her meagre acquaintance with the language made its intoning about her the agent of an immense suggestiveness, accentuated her aloofness, gave her the sense of an antique wanderer come into a strange, unvisited land, barbaric and colourful, fresh with allure. She loved the streets, and now she was free to wander through them with all the unrestraint of a spirit without body. To her, this had the freshness of a new life. The comedy of crowds enticed her with an appeal as to the spectacle of a gargantuan theatre.

Finally, when the physical appearance of the city became less new to her, she found herself more largely interested in the girls on the thoroughfares and the men who were their companions. She made a thousand conjectures as to their relations. She wondered if these fair-skinned girls, with their transparent eyes and hair that was seldom darker than brown, had any deep potentiality of emotion; that seemed doubtful to her. The men did not entice her; she could not vision them in the rôle of fine companions or ardent lovers.

Nevertheless, the fact that they were men, their simple masculinity, gave her the desire to be with them; she became lonesome; she wanted companionship.

She had a little apartment in the studio quarter in West Sixty-seventh Street and to a certain extent she had visitors there. In the city there were usually a few travellers from her country, and those of any position who knew of her presence came to see her. She was perfunctorily hospitable, but none of these people interested her; chiefly

she enjoyed their visits for the sake of speaking her own language again.

One day she received a copy of a little local magazine, a miscellaneous and characterless journal, published in Spanish. It would be pleasant, she thought immediately, to write something for this. She memorized the address of the office and decided to call on the editor. She took with her the manuscript of four or five essays that she called "Souls of Women"—authentic confessions made to her by her married friends. She was certain the paper would be glad to use them. With the manuscript in her hand she waited one morning in a dirty little outer office whilst a dark-eyed boy took in her card through a swinging door.

After a very short interval he returned and told her to go in. She passed through the door and discovered another little room, somewhat smaller and dirtier than the first. A large man was seated at a disordered desk; he did not rise at her entrance. His hair was the jet to which she was accustomed, his eyes were dark like her own and the lids were heavy, reminding her of her father, the droop of satiety and disillusion. His cheeks were fat from an immense amount of eating and drinking. After a moment he stood up, smiling, and she gave him her hand.

"Is this Señor Paláez?" she asked.

He assented; he expressed his great satisfaction that she had come in to see him; his voice proceeded from deep in his throat with an effortless ease of speech. She regretted now that she had come and she resented his manner of immediate intimacy. Still, she showed him her manuscripts and he fingered them smiling, turning back over the pages again and again. He meanwhile asked her questions about herself and she answered him briefly.

"Yes, Señorita," he said. "I'm sure we can use these. Yes; I'm very glad to get them. This is a fortunate day. You write very well. Tell me why you wrote these? Who taught you to write?"

He queried her with the palpable purpose of prolonging the interview. The conversation irked her, and seemed without end. Finally she stood up resolutely, determined to go. He arose also and stood at her side. He talked into her face, insinuatingly close. In her anger at his abominable nearness the dusky skin of her cheeks deepened in colour.

"Well, thank you, Señor," she said. "Good-bye. . . ."

He captured her hand and pressed it close in his large palm. She drew back her arm in a swift resentment, but his clutch retained her little hand like the tentacle of an octopus.

"*Señor!*" she exclaimed.

His smile persisted, fixed and abominable. With a swift movement of his large arm he circled her shoulders. He drew her against him and like the effluvium from a poison she smelt the odour of stale tobacco in his clothes.

For an instant her surprise kept her limp, and then each muscle of her small body seemed to contract as from the stimulus of an immense urgency, a profound danger. With an impetuous violence she thrust him away from her. He tripped back against the chair in which she had been seated, it toppled to the side, he clutched the air vainly; like a wildly animated and dropsical sack he tumbled into a complexity of chair-rungs: they snapped with sharp little reports and a piece of wood flew up into the air and struck the ceiling.

In the moment of his disaster, she ran through the door and slammed it furiously behind her. She hurried down the steps of the building, tucking up the loosed, dusky strands of her disordered hair.

In the street her shoulders flexed and drooped and her cheeks were coloured carmine with an inner sense of shame. Suddenly the glamour of her freedom was gone and with it her expectations and her dreams. For months she had been away from her home and all these days had gone by in trivial hours, with never the flame of any fine emotion. She had escaped from one prison to pass through the portals of another, an

empty prison, peopled with a host of phantoms, not of her flesh and blood, not of her heart and desire. She was alone in an unreality.

Now she remembered that her manuscripts were lying on the desk of the abominable editor. She would never go back for them. She recalled her last glimpse of him, sprawled in a chaos of splintered wood, like a grotesque tumble-bug immeshed in an extravagant web. She began to laugh in hysterical gasps. Men and women, passing in the street, turned to look after her.

III

But whatever might have been this editor's opinion of her, he was not deterred from using her material, and two or three months later she was surprised to find it in print in the magazine. She had passed these months in a lethargic ennui, sleeping as much as possible, reading very little, interested in nothing. She had pondered many times the advisability of returning home — but there was no advantage in that manœuvre; life anywhere seemed emptied of possibilities, nor was there any place where events, shaping themselves to her desire, would light a flame within her and give her with intensity the desiderate consciousness of transcendent living.

Then, after her essays had been in print a week or a little more, a letter came to her, forwarded from the office of the magazine; it was written in Spanish and she vaguely remembered the name of the writer, a young revolutionary and refugee from her country. She read his letter more than once, surprised that he should have written to her, interested, wondering, endeavouring to conceive his appearance. He said:

"Your stories transport the emotions of real life to the printed page; for me to find them was a great discovery. Are you living in New York? I remember your name very well. In our country you knew most of my friends and frequently you were mentioned by them. Curiously enough, I do not believe we ever met. I have the greatest wish to meet you now, and if you will tell me where you live, and send me your permission, I will come at once to see you. . . . César Vegas."

Bit by bit she recalled more of him, from the remembered talk of her friends. It was true: she had never met him. He belonged to a very radical revolutionary group. While she knew most of these men, it was not their doctrines that attracted her; she was drawn solely to their freedom, their unconventionality, their insurgent spirit. She remembered now that Vegas, with two or three others, had been forced to escape from the country overnight.

Of course she determined to see him. She wrote to him, granting his request and setting a day for his appearance. Again she was interested, her thoughts vivacious, her fancies aroused. She wondered if she would please him; she sat in front of her mirror smoothing out her hair that passed through the comb like the black ripples of an inky stream, looking into her eyes, shaping her lips into the curves of smiles, of pouts, of scorn, of pleasure—wondering if a man would find her lovely. Once she paused and laughed at the vivacity of her spirits, realizing then her isolation and her loneliness during the months that had just gone by.

On the evening set for his coming she put on a dress of thick plush that would be soft to a tender touch. She heaped up her hair in the Spanish fashion with a great jet knot at the back of her head and she stuck a red flower, a crimson symbol of her charm, at one side. She waited for him seated at her piano, languorously fingering chords, playing snatches of native dances, recalling, for some reason, the days when she was a little girl, and the sunlight, glittering like a golden garment on the tropical fields of her country home, used to take her breath with its magic suggestiveness. . . . She heard the bell of the apartment ring, and she went to the door to open it.

He was standing in the corridor and she stepped aside to let him come in. For a moment they remained motion-

less, appraising each other earnestly. Then he spoke to her, shaping his sentences through an illuminating smile.

"Isn't it strange," he said, "that we should meet here! I can remember your name for a long time—isn't it curious that we never came together at home? I'm delighted to see you; I'm delighted you let me come."

She took his hat and coat, turning to lay them over a chair, and deeply pleased, meanwhile, in her first impression of him. His manner, the atmosphere he created, was vastly different from that of the members of the revolutionary group she had known; physically he was different. The others had been, for the most part, robustious fellows, with far less suavity in their speech. For one of her country he was unusually pale, and his pallor was made more manifest by the contrasting black of his glistening hair. His nose was modelled straight and slender, flexible at the nostrils, that dilated faintly as he spoke. When he had given her his hand she had noticed the long slimness of his fingers.

His manner gave no impression of weakness, yet contradictorily, from his pallid face, from the glow of his dark eyes, from the sensitive nostrils and finely fashioned lips she was conscious of a sense of frailty that stirred her strength and her abundant vitality with the tenderness of protection. In the ardent swiftness of her emotions she was already deeply pleased with him, aware of a contenting intimacy.

They seated themselves and she began to question him.

"Tell me about yourself, Señor," she said. "Why are you here? What did you do?"

He laughed frankly.

"I was the least serious of all our group," he said. "It's very ironical that I should be a fugitive and not some of the others. I was an *insurrecto* for the excitement. They accused me of Manuel Ayala's death, which was a very inaccurate supposition. But the government must fix on somebody—isn't that so? It was my bad fortune!"

She smiled at him warmly, showing, like suddenly revealed jewels, her nacré teeth between her crimson lips.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "I'm very glad you weren't serious! I knew so many of the revolutionaries, and, do you know, I have to tell you that when I didn't suspect their sincerity I found them great fools. What I had in sympathy with them was that they were living life—do you understand? They took a hazard, they braved an excitement, they were not content with safety!"

An animation possessed her features as if from the warmth of a lighted flame within her. Her hands moved in gracile, swift gesticulation. Her eyes, looking straight at his own, seemed to see beyond him, seemed to witness, as if he were a medium of revealing transparency, a glamour behind him: the colour of ardent life and the passions of living, the loves, the hates, the hopes, the tragedies.

Swiftly she questioned him, causing him to reveal all the facts of his life, his aspirations and his expectations, his beliefs and his more intimate wantings. She found a full sympathy for him: he had courage and the flame of adventure.

Then she began to talk of herself. Sentence by sentence, luminously exposed in her swift and eager speech, he came to the acquaintance of her insurgent spirit, her defiances, her vehement love of life. To her emotions he felt a keen response; she touched his spirit like deft fingers playing upon an instrument subtle and difficult. Finally she told him of her adventure with the poet Lameda—he had known Lameda—and the scene with her father. She was leaning close to him, and as she spoke of the dead man her eyes were tender with sympathy. With a simple movement he took her hands and pressed her fingers against his own.

"Ah, you are brave!" he whispered. "You are courageous!"

His touch tingled in her fingers, his words caressed her ears. She ceased speaking; leaning toward him, she met his eyes; he still retained her hands.

An expectancy like a presence, like a spirit, hung over these two.

Then, moving nearer, his arms circled her slender shoulders. She let her head fall back to receive his kiss that came to her lips with a sudden intensity. In that moment she could not breathe, and even her heart, although she heard the beating of it in her breast, seemed paradoxically stilled. For her, his kiss suspended her life, drew it out of her, stopped all the living processes, made her lifeless with emotion. Their lips separated and she drew in a breath, with the conviction that in another second of that suffocation she would have died. She tried to smile at him, but her lips would not take the contour of a smile.

"*Bienamado!*" she murmured. "How suddenly you have come to me! You are the lover I have looked for all my life! I shall bring you everything of love. You are a harmonium of many notes; other women have played some of them, the little *grisettes* you have known, but I shall touch them all! I will make you happy; I will make you suffer—you don't believe that I will make you suffer? Yes, you will: I think, in the life, everything is at a balance, everything is compensated. But, *bienamado*, we do not have to think of that. Tell me if you love me; tell me what I mean to you."

Her quick fire did not surprise him, for he was of her own temperament. He could respond to her words fully, and, like her touch, find them lovely in his ears.

IV

WHEN he left that night he promised to return the next evening, and all the following day she recalled the memory of his face, of his touch, of his encircling arms. Waiting for him, she dreamed fantastic dreams of him, as if she had taken a drug into her veins. From the simple theme of her affection, she constructed elaborate variations, like the modulations of a symphony.

Once she imagined him, in some more gracious country, giving a dinner to a group of distinguished men, artists of all kinds. When the banquet was finished he stood up and told his guests that he had lately acquired a little Abyssinian slave whom he would be glad now to show them. The company left the table and went into another chamber, a large room, curiously illuminated with a glow of dull ruby. There were no furnishings in this room and the guests stood about at one end. Near the other extremity were long curtains of a deep crimson plush and in front of the curtains was found, spread out on the floor, a huge black bear's skin. On either side of the skin, held upright in some obscure manner, were two immense fans made from the tail-feathers of peacocks.

The guests fastened their eyes upon the crimson curtains, and presently these parted and the little Abyssinian slave entered. She was nude, save for a gold collar about her neck, two gold bands around her wrists and similar golden bands circling her ankles; the collar at her throat was connected by slender aurine chains to the bands about her wrists. She was brown and smooth, with the immature contours of a child. She entered with her eyes downcast, embarrassed and afraid, and approached the bear's skin, upon which she reclined at last. Then the two fans of peacocks' tails, heretofore upright on either side of her, descended slowly, until they engulfed her whole small body, hiding her from the watching eyes of the guests. The ruby lights commenced to dim and the company slowly left the room in silence. And Pereira dreamed that the little Abyssinian slave was herself.

In the evening she sat waiting for him, expectant any moment of his ring that again and again, hearing it in her imagination, she conceived as the summons to high adventure. She heard the moments passing in the ticks of a small clock and she was jealous of each one of them that went to make the hours without his presence. Then suddenly she realized that it was late, that he had not come, that he was not com-

ing. The night passed for her in torturing speculations.

The next morning a letter arrived, signed with a strange name, an address at the top of the sheet. It said:

"Señor Vegas has contracted a sudden sickness. He asks me to write to you and make this explanation and also to ask you to be kind enough to come and see him."

She was immediately possessed of terrifying presentiments; she imagined him in grave danger, dying, perhaps already dead. She hurried to the telephone, and in an agitation that almost deprived her of her use of English, she called a taxicab. An immense period of time, she believed, passed before it arrived, and seated within it, the passage through the streets was cruelly slow.

They stopped at the address given in the letter; she handed the taxi-driver a bill and without waiting, hurried up the steps of the house. A coloured maid answered her ring.

"How is Mr. Vegas?" she asked—and then she found that her throat hurt her in speaking. "I want to see him!"

She was taken upstairs and shown the door of a room in the corridor. She opened it and entered. He was lying on a large bed, with his eyes closed.

She ran to the bed and touched her hands to his cheeks; his eyes opened and he looked into her face.

"*Querida mia!*" she exclaimed.

He smiled at her slightly, drew out his hand from the bed-covers and touched her arm, closed his eyes again. She saw now that her fears had a foundation: he was very ill.

Later she talked to the doctor when he came and he told her that Vegas had contracted pneumonia.

"What is the danger?" she asked. "We do not have this sickness in our country."

The physician, an abrupt, thick-bodied man, shrugged his shoulders clumsily.

"We'll do the best possible," he said. "This is a very dangerous disease for anybody: you might as well know that it's especially dangerous for anyone who has always lived in a tropical climate. If we can bring about his recovery, he must go back to his own country. This morning I'll call in a nurse for him."

Her cheeks reddened angrily.

"No!" she exclaimed. "Do you imagine anyone will nurse him but myself?"

She took a room in the house, the room next to his own, and tended him day and night with an extravagant faithfulness. She seemed never to sleep, nor, sustained by the power of her devotion, to require sleep. She sat by his side during the hours of his delirium; he spoke incoherently of other women he had known; she hated his fevered memories of them. The crisis came. All one night she remained at the bed, watching his pulse, listening to his heart, waiting in a suspension of all her dreams, of her most precious hopes, for the outcome. . . . In the morning his fever had gone down and his breathing was easier.

Now her fears passed; she was assured and confident. She remembered the words of the doctor: "If we can bring about his recovery, he must go back to his own country."

That was now, she knew, an immense necessity. No compromise of another tropical place seemed possible to her, any variation appealed to her mind as a gamble with his life. She knew well enough his position; under existing circumstances he could not return; he was a fugitive, under an absurd and unjust sentence. But this fact did not appal her.

Doubtless it had been her own father who had made his flight necessary; her father could secure his pardon. She began to compose a letter to her father and she told him of her lover, of her love and her desire.

"Perhaps I have not been to you what I should have been?" she said. "Forgive me now! Life has granted me at last my dearest aspirations and I cannot bring you any more trouble; I will try to help you all I can. Let us come

back home; I will never let you regret your dear kindness."

The letter was mailed and now she spent the days, happy and assured, with her convalescent lover.

She found him all she had believed, all she had hoped, all she had known in the sure perceptions of her intuition. They talked endlessly, planning their life together, the people they would know, the places they would visit, the scenes they would witness. It would be, they knew, a noble companionship, a thrilling intimacy.

Then one day, as she had been certain in her fine confidence it would, a reply came from her father, the Minister of War in the Presidential cabinet.

"You are pardoned everything, Pereira," he said. "You can both come home."

V

As soon as she believed him strong enough to make the trip they embarked in a slim white steamer for the south. The trip down took several days longer than the one from their country to the States, for now they were retarded by the Gulf current. Yet the time did not pass slowly for them; they had their visions. Neither knew a doubt, both were assured; the abounding sea through which they moved with a steel throb and pulsation brought them no sense of inscrutable destiny, no shadow of fear; the sun shone on the sea and it was never too vast for the compass of their dreams.

The ship laid by in the harbour at Havana for one day and they went ashore, walking through the streets arm in arm. They laughed at the curious Cuban songs of the street-boys; each moment was the little minister of their content. The voyage was resumed, and now they knew that in a little while they would be home.

They entered the roadstead before the coast city of their country early one morning. An official launch came out; presently they were taken off with a small group who were disembarking there, and carried in the launch to the quay.

Pereira, in her returning, was filled with the memories of her departure, of her impatience with these people and this land, of her vague, undefined desires that she believed would have their fulfilment in another country; of the gradual failure of her hopes—and now, of their splendid recrudescence. They touched the wooden sides of the wharf and a uniformed official helped them out of the launch. A group of soldiers were standing at the landing place and as Vegas and Pereira set foot on the wooden planks they came forward.

"Señor César Vegas?" asked the one in command.

"Yes," answered Vegas.

"I regret," he said, "that you are under arrest for the assassination of Manuel Ayala."

The soldiers surrounded him and he was pulled hurriedly down the quay.

The woman remained on the spot spellbound with astonishment. The event had deprived her, in those seconds, of her resolution and her perceptions. Finally, the conviction of some absurd mistake, some bizarre official error, entered her mind. She looked about her on the wharf. Two or three men were lounging near, grinning at her. She saw no one whom she knew.

Now she was aware of the necessity of going to her father at once. She hurried into the street and secured a cab; she gave the driver the street-number of her home. They proceeded with abominable leisure, whilst she sat in the cab with contracted brows, a rising anger in her spirits. She wondered who had been responsible for this indignity; she determined on the punishment of the offender.

At home she found no one but the servants; her little maid, whom she had left behind, kissed her, fondled her, but Pereira was insensible to any welcome.

"Where is my father?" she asked.

They told her that he had gone to the Presidential palace.

She ordered one of the servants to

drive her there. Here she was recognized and admitted with the greatest courtesy. She demanded her father; there was a wait of more than half an hour and word was then sent to her that it was impossible for him to see her at that time. She perceived nothing for her to do save to return home.

She spent the day in her room, sending her maid out every few minutes to find whether or not her father had come in. He did not return all day. Her anger grew with every hour and with it, admixed like a sinister shadow, the beginning of a clutching fear that closed about her heart like a suffocating land. The night passed in sleepless agitation.

In the morning she dressed very early and went out into the streets. She was determined now to see her lover, wherever he might be, to find him and secure his release without the passing of another torturing hour. She discovered the buildings along the streets decorated with flags and there was a stir of expectant people. Now she remembered that this was a national holiday, celebrating the birth of Bolivar, the liberator. In the Calle de Riviera a crowd was collecting, waiting for a parade which would include the President, his cabinet and the soldiery. She hurried along this thoroughfare, oblivious to the crowds, as if their individuals were phantoms, without substance; she was concentrated on visiting the state prison, where she now imagined Vegas might be confined.

She approached the gates of the prison, passed through, and the commandant, in his elaborate office, recognized her. He gave her a bow of great consideration.

"I have come to see Señor Vegas," she said. "Has he been brought here? Let me see him at once!"

"Señorita," he said, "you have my utmost regrets. That is impossible!"

"I must see him at once!" she reiterated. "Don't talk to me of impossibilities!"

"But, Señorita," he insisted, "a thousand pardons; your request is beyond my power to grant. The Señor cannot be seen."

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"It is very unfortunate," he answered. "You are too late, Señorita. The Señor Vegas was executed something over an hour ago. . . ."

VI

She went home and her senses were numb, as if a narcotic drug had stilled her sensations, depriving her of all emotion, all pain, all hope, all desire. Her brows were contracted, her face was colourless, her movements were precise as if under the impulse of a single dominating purpose, a purpose clear and direct, a purpose almost sublime in its simplicity. She went to her room and searched in the drawers of her bureau that had been untouched since her departure many months before. She found the object of her search and returned to the streets.

Along the Calle de Riviera the crowd had increased largely and Pereira stationed herself at a point near the kerb, waiting for the presidential party. A platoon of cavalry approached and passed on sleek horses; the crowd cheered. A band went by with a blare of brass. Another cavalry platoon drew near and behind it, mounted on white horses, were the President and his ministers. Now she saw her father, erect, cold, cynical, sardonic. She saw him riding toward her on his white horse, the slave of his ambition, the destroying master of her dreams, making the sacrifice of her most precious aims to serve the purpose of his aspirations. Her head was tilted back in an emotion of flaming pride; she saw herself as the Egyptian queen, whose courage was adequate to her tragedy, whose chariot was never to be drawn in the triumph of a conqueror.

Now he was opposite her; from her dress she drew out the revolver she had secured from the drawer at home, and holding it straight in her white, slender hands, she fired it at the erect man on the white horse. The horse

reared up; the man, as if clutched by some invisible hands, seemed suspended for a magic instant in the air; the spell passed and he tumbled to the street.

About her the crowd drew back in panic fear; she heard the din of shouting and the screams of women. She saw a dozen soldiers dismount from their horses and run toward her.

Then, in an instant of time, she had the vision of her hopes, and life was before her eyes in its enchantment and its promise. There it was, beckoning and appealing, the glamorous life of her dreams. The instant passed, and before the running men could reach her, she turned the faintly smoking weapon on herself.

STARS

By Jeannette Marks

I

WHEN joys were vivid I did sit
Within a golden field,
And there I pulled the whitest stars
Green earth can yield.

II

For Bethlehem those stars were named,
The Lord Christ sat with me;
And I was little and I leaned
Upon His knee.

III

Now I am old and joys are gone,
Christ in this room I find,
Why brings from distant Bethlehem
Stars for His blind.

IT is so much easier for a woman to tell about the trouble her husband causes her than to reveal the reasons that induce her to continue living with him.

WOMEN do not care for timid, sentimental men. Fishing is no fun unless the trout is game.

A SUCCESSFUL marriage merely means a difficult divorce.

FURTHER JOHNSONIANA

By Edna A. Collamore

RACE: a contest in speed.
Racy: over-eager in the speed contest.

Reverie: dreaminess.
Reverend: one who induces dreaminess.

Rid: to destroy with violence.
Ridicule: to destroy without violence.

Litter: scattered rubbish.
Literature: collected rubbish.

Surge: a swell, a great roll.
Surgeon: a medical swell, skilled in removing great rolls.

Fin: part of a fish.
Affinity: a fishy relationship.

Both: the two.
Bother: the third.

Flue: a passage for hot air.
Fluency: the passage of hot air.

THE PROCRASTINATOR

By T. F. Mitchell

SHE winked at me. I stood amazed for a moment, ignorant as I was of the wiles and ways of womenkind. I did not know just what procedure to follow. It took me some time to decide to approach her. Alas, I was too late! She had, meanwhile, winked at one of the initiated.

THE DARING OF RICHARD DOLBY

By William Francis Barnard

I

WHAT an interminable luncheon it had been, with its reminiscent soup, a roast (probably mutton), the salad lacking that edge which only a good vinegar could give, and the dessert a dole made of doubts. And as for companionship. . . . What flaccid fogies Mr. and Mrs. Balcome were!

The two had sat there at table like figures carved in dough, alternately digging out of their graves the débris of their early married life and putting its petty fragments together piece by piece. They only varied this by asking him how his health was, what had become of Arthur, his forgotten chum, and if he were going to Florida to avoid the winter cold. All the while they urged the food upon him as if it were a solemn duty, like reading prayers in the morning, or telling John twice a day to shake down the furnace.

He shivered as he thought of the gravy, cold and of the consistency of paste. It had typified for him the whole of that life there, running thick and obstinate, as if weary of its own pouring.

"All that comes of growing old," he said, confiding in himself for a moment.

He threw his shoes into a corner in true irritated abandonment, hung his coat upon a chair back, and, toeing his way into his slippers, dived into a smoking jacket. Then he lighted a cigar, and sat down heavily before the grate, smoking with short, hungry inhalations.

"Yes, we *do* grow old."

He writhed up suddenly, sitting very straight. That "we," where had it pushed in from? He had not intentionally uttered it. In truth, for the past ten years, since wrinkles had crowded into their places at the corners of his eyes, and posted themselves dispassionately where they could just mock the smile of youth, on one subject he had been marble. Since his thirty-fifth birthday he had absolutely refrained from all conversation upon age, grey hair, and that vague disquiet which comes to all men when, after forty-seven, they see Autumn giving up its leaves and hear the doleful wind that says "November."

What had drawn out of him that "We"? Had he not been in more arduous health this summer than for many years past? Did he not sleep better now? Was he not taking longer walks every forenoon? Could he not . . . everything?

He, "Old"!

Preposterous!

It had all resulted from that dismal luncheon which he had eaten with those superannuated memories in clothes. He might have anticipated some banality after two hours in such an atmosphere.

He jerked his cigar from his mouth, looked at it critically, placed it between his jaws again, rolled it, and gripped it firmly. Then he said "*No*, sir," several times, settling down farther into his seat with each eruption. "Old" was no fit brand to mark him with.

Could he not recall that great triumph of adolescence, accomplished in his thirty-fifth year, when he had topped in the pole vault every competing man who had been in his class, the class of '89? And had he not lifted most on that day, though they had come together, thirty of them, from all the

States, or nearly all, and gone through their dizzy paces under the old elms? He remembered eagerly that he had stretched all their mouths by winning the two-hundred-yard dash in a tumultuous rally, putting three lengths between himself and his nearest panting competitor.

It was a poor joke to call him old.

And he chewed with warm glows and throbs of returning complacency upon the remarks of his friends that day. "Dolby, you are not an hour older than you were when we matriculated. You must have led a twenty-two-carat life." This and other tributes they had proffered, willingly or grudgingly, according to temperament and honesty, acknowledging his impeccable freshness, his untarnished vitality. He hummed to himself, happy, smoothing out the cloth of his trousers just above the knees with flattering palms.

He moved into the very thick of returning expansiveness as he rose and surveyed himself in the long mirror which made the door of his wardrobe. He saw a man of, say, thirty-two, just grey enough to look strong; erect, clear-eyed, firm-fleshed, with even a trace of galloping blood in the not-too-plump cheeks. He turned sideways to dare fate in a critical appraisal of that slight, very slight, adipose detritus which caused his waistcoat to wrinkle just perceptibly at the second button from the bottom.

He beat his chest emphatically with his right hand as he turned about; and laying aside his half-smoked cigar and luxuriously lighting another one, he began to puff anew, filling the room with the clouds of his importance.

"I could walk, or jump, or climb, or run, or box, or wrestle with many a good one now," he muttered through tight teeth.

"Yes, and I could marry, if I wanted to."

The thought held him, prompted him.

That was it: marry! Yes.

Marriage would settle it.

He could marry!

A pause.

He would marry: he had been long weighing that matter in his mind.

Marriage. . . . A final victory!

He decided.

To telephone to Kate then and there, while the project burned! It was (he looked at his watch) only five o'clock. That would give her three hours to dress. He would ask her to the theatre to see some heart-shaking play; and then, after he had sat in state beside her during the whole evening, he would take her to Paradise Inn, and there . . . at supper . . . he would call for the truth, the happy truth. He would say grandly, "Kate, will you marry me?"

Kate would answer yes, astonished and delighted at his carrying things with such compelling verve; admiring his strength, his confidence, his vital youth.

And he would marry her soon, very soon; at once; in a month.

He mused, lingering tenderly upon his first great love struggle with this Kate Adams, a girl of the approved New England type; fair, a little distant, resolute, calm. She, it was said, always had an answer for every question asked her; one that hung on her lip waiting that sure clash of events which should shake it to its fall.

But he had mastered there, too, he felt sure. It had all evolved when he tried to kiss her the first time, after a discreet six months of calculated devotion. The cab was nearing Kate's home; it had but two blocks to go. She had said as he reached for her left cheek, trying to persuade her keen lips in the direction of his own, "Isn't it rather late for your springtime?"

Feeling truly then that delays are damnable, he had clasped those slender and writhing hands, and bending her head back, while her fluttering breathing intoxicated him, he had kissed her emphatically upon both mouth and eyes; kissed her again and again. And as she struggled and begged him to release her after a tumultuously successful raid upon her mouth, she had whispered wickedly, "Aren't you tired?"

From that time a sort of ringless engagement, punctuated by half-hearted quarrels, had existed between them; and they saw each other at least once a week.

And all that had happened only four years before this hour; this hour in which suddenly, full of the juices of youth, looking the sun in the face, he had determined to put his effervescence to the proof, and marry her.

"Old, indeed!" He would shake up those broken Balcomes. And their house, where his father before him had been a guest, should never know Kate or him after the wedding! There was something stale-biscuity about the place and all its belongings!

He rose and turned to the telephone with a light step, securing, as was the prerogative of a preferred suitor of nearly five years' standing, postponement of sundry engagements, a needed somnolence, and other feminine duties and superfluities; and Kate Adams gave her word to be dressed and downstairs at precisely 7.45 that evening to accompany her destiny to the opera.

He thereupon telephoned to a broker whom he knew, and got, after some unkind exchanges, two good seats for the opera, paying twenty dollars. But what were twenty dollars to a presence like his, just ripening to the great career!

Bethinking himself, he turned again to the telephone, and ordered flowers.

He would demonstrate. He would be the blinding light, taking first place once for all.

"Old." The baboons!

He whirled around to dress, volubly approving his evening clothes as he laid them out on the bed. Then he looked at his store of white bows.

II

Two hours later, that is, to be precise, at six o'clock, Mr. Richard Dolby, bachelor, with love in his eyes, not having to pinch a single pinch to live, emerged from his house. He sauntered across the park toward his club, where he meant to settle down to confessional with a solemn sandwich or two and a bottle of ale, and prepare those fine fateful words which should close the slight furrow between him and the woman of his picking.

The westering sun, painting rose and gold the waters of the lake, arrested him for a moment, and he sat down on a bench to linger and absorb the poetry of the scene, a very Tacoma on the plains of passionate devotion.

In a moment, out of a crowd of children sailing boats on those perilous seas, destruction approached him in the shape of a miss of five or six years. She hesitated a moment, a tiny boat in one hand, her doll in another, and then, bent on free hands for voyaging, she pleaded:

"Hold my doll, Grandpa."

The shock, as of lightning, struck him with unerring force, as she repeated:

"Hold my doll, Grandpa!"

He felt his heart-beat drag as though loaded with chains.

He would have risen and fled wildly, but with the confidence of immaturity the tot placed her doll at once in his clenched gloved hands, which opened, he knew not why, to receive the appalling burden.

"Grandpa's holding my doll; and I'm going to sail my boat to China!" the child screamed with triumphant shrilling, jumping up and down.

In a moment he was surrounded by children, who exclaimed in turn, as the tiny girl proudly eyed him and pointed to his nursing hands:

"Is he your grandpa?"

"He's a nice grandpa."

"His hair is white."

"Be my grandpa?"

"I have a grandpa, too."

In emulation they crowded about him, commenting upon his looks, his probable age, his possible wealth, till one completed the debacle by climbing up beside him and snuggling down between his arm and his body, having separated

the one from the other deftly to make herself a snug nest, and saying in prattling speech:

"Now he's my grandpa, too."

III

A TROUBLED and floundering figure, immaculately clothed, dragged across the park, aiming at its club. It had almost ruthlessly brushed aside several tiny torturers as it rose hastily, and without a word fled.

"Good-night, Grandpa," from the little girl whose doll had fallen from his dead hands, elicited no reply, as with set teeth and earthward face he turned away.

That night Miss Kate Adams, with admirable indirection and self-disparagement, gave Mr. Richard Dolby his answer. They were sitting at a little round table in the Paradise Inn. Mr. Dolby had been oracular. His courage stood in a half-emptied bottle before him.

Miss Adams' words were:

"I am too old to marry, my friend."

FROM A HIGH WINDOW

By Jean Allen

I WOULD be free
As fine white smoke
That buffeted by quick winds
Blows and swirls about
The tops of tall thin buildings:
As smoke that juts
In clean white puffs
From ferry boats and tugs
That ply along the river
Beneath my window.

I would be free, only
As clean bright smoke
That blows and circles
With the wind's desire.
So would I be
Free from you
Till you should feel
The need and want of me,
And catch me suddenly
To your heart.

EXPERIENCE teaches a man two things: first, that there are certain things he ought to avoid, and second, that there is not much chance of his avoiding them.

A MAN OF FORETHOUGHT

By Kenneth Burke

I

CARTER admitted it to himself: his hand was trembling. For after all, there was no reason why he shouldn't admit it; and there was no reason why his hand shouldn't tremble. He was to decide a woman's destiny today, and the woman was atrociously good-looking.

As he stood with his eyes fastened on the dull little penny that lay in his quivering palm, Carter mused poetically on the idea that a mere penny would decide his fate. Any number of people had thrown caution to the various winds when tempted by an obese wallet; he even remembered having read a touching tale of a girl's having gone astray for a pair of shoes; but here he was, the prince of all lost souls, following the dictates of a penny.

Perhaps he had better make it the best out of three tosses. After all, one lone final toss was too sudden, too brutal almost. It was like having the electric light switched on when one had been dozing in the dark. It was like trying to step up one more step than there was, and getting oneself disturbingly jolted. The little penny, as it lay head upright before him, shouted its commands at him, and he resented it. By heavens, he *would* make it the best out of three tosses!

Still, that was unfair, both to himself and the penny. He had sworn on the Blue Book that it would be one toss, and only one. Very well, he would compromise.

He opened the second drawer of his desk and took out a pack of cards. If an ace turned up within the first eleven cards he would take three tosses instead of one.

He shuffled the cards nervously; in his excitement he dropped a couple. They fell face up on the floor, and he saw that one was an ace. He had a sneaking temptation to put it on the top of the pack and begin dealing, but one last spark of manhood held out, and he shuffled the ace out of knowledge into the pack. Then he began dealing.

The fifth card was an ace. He breathed easier. Now he was entitled to two more tosses of the coin.

He took a glance at himself in the mirror and decided that the pallor caused by this excitement made him very handsome. He gave his hair an unnecessary stroke or two. Then he steeled himself for the second toss.

"As before, heads—yes, tails—no; get ready, get set, one, two, three, go!"

The penny sailed high into the air, clinked against the ceiling, fell promptly and rolled under the piano. Carter strained himself to get it out without bagging his trousers. Good—it was tails.

He had earned an intermission. He poured himself a generous drink of his favourite cognac. He paused a bit. Then, made more courageous by the alcohol, he picked up the coin and threw it on his little mahogany *guéridon* with a magnificent carelessness.

Done!

"In God we trust . . . Liberty . . . 1916 . . ." and the serene profile of Abraham Lincoln with his eyes seeking the decanter of cognac.

John Carter cursed *pianissimo*. But his fate was decided—absolutely. Destiny had spoken; and poor dear Clarisse

must pay the penalty. For it is the woman who pays; it is not the tempting man but the tempted woman who must suffer. Carter was decidedly comforted by repeating to himself this beautiful commonplace.

But he must act immediately. He knew only too well his deucedly cautious nature. He rushed to the 'phone and told the operator in the corridor of the apartment hotel to call a taxi. Then he added a few feverish touches to his toilet.

He reflected with a certain relief that this half-affair between himself and Clarisse was to be settled at last. It had hung on for years now, ever since long before her marriage. Of course, it was a miserable thing to do to Dick. But he had had too much consideration for Dick already. Beginning with the days he had pulled Dick through his Latin at prep school, and ending with his noble stupidity of coming all the way from Italy to be best man at their wedding, Carter's life had been one long list of self-sacrifices for Dick.

Bosom friend or no bosom friend, Carter had at last decided to obey the commands of the tossed penny. He was desperately in love with Clarisse, so much so that he had taken all his other women off the mantelpiece. And such an absorbing love, that might some day spoil his appetite, deserved expression.

The 'phone rang. Carter swung around with a frightened jerk, and overturned a pile of music. He snatched the receiver.

"Taxi? Yes, be right down. What? No? Oh, pshaw! Tell him I'm not at home." He slapped down the receiver and began picking up the music. He was shaking all over.

"Damn it, I'm too nervous," he muttered. "I'll force myself to be quiet. I'll play something, something of my own, something very gentle. But I have nothing very gentle. I don't turn out things like that. Let's see, there is a soft little thing of Debussy's. But all the little girls play that now after they're through with the 'Dance of the Witches' and 'Snowy Dewdrops.' Grade 3A. The devil. There is a lovely little minuet in one of Beethoven's sonatas. The old masters, something with good solid harmonies . . . that's what I want. Perhaps a good-humoured bit of Haydn. Perhaps. . . ."

The 'phone rang. It was the taxi. He rushed out of the room. What luck what divinely auspicious luck. . . . he just caught the elevator. Evidently everything was going to go well. He tumbled hastily into the cab and almost whispered the address to the driver. The man looked at him sharply, as though he understood. The insolence! Carter felt himself getting angry. What was the ass waiting for?

"Hurry. I am in a dreadful hurry. I will make it worth your while."

"East or West?" the driver asked.

Oh, so that was the trouble? In his precipitancy he had merely neglected to say which side of Fifth Avenue. How ridiculous of him to get angry when it was all his fault.

"East," and the taxi was off.

As he was jolted about in the capricious taxi, he tried to form some definite plan of action. For decidedly he was a man of forethought. It wouldn't do to stumble in abruptly, drop on his knees, and blubber out "I love you." Yet, on the other hand, this very suddenness might be effective; women are often highly susceptible to that sort of technique. Still, if he began immediately with these sudden tactics, it might lead to something embarrassing. He had better delay until he had made sure no one was there besides Clarisse. It would be just as well, after a mysterious silence, after five minutes of vague and absent-minded conversation, to be *then* transformed into a passionate whirlwind.

But about this "I love you." Here was a problem which always kept turning up, and for which he had never found a solution. Does a phrase, when applied to these ultimate issues, gain by being so hopelessly banal, or does it lose? Women aren't so particular about the brand-newness of a sentence

as men are. They are more taken with the impetus of it, and an "I love you," said quiveringly enough, was probably the best one could do. They like to think one is speaking the eternal sentence; it lends a certain cosmic air to their love. Just as the little birdies and grasshoppers have chirped the same love-chirp for centuries and centuries, so this poor man, prostrate before them under the heavy burden of this ultimate issue, must make the same noise as his ancestors, the same meagre succession of syllables must trill from his love-thick tongue.

II

THE taxi, getting suddenly clear of all traffic impediments, took a short spurt, and the realization that he was nearing Clarisse so swiftly stirred up a little panic in Carter. When he had calmed down a bit, he resolved to be less practical in his meditations; he grew ashamed of their cold-bloodedness. He huddled himself into an amorphous jostled mass, and let his mind wander back to the more idyllic phases of their attachment.

The various attitudes he had gone through had purified him, he decided. For the first few months after their marriage he had refused loyally even to lift his eyes to her; he had tried to get her out of his thoughts. What a noble time that had been!

First, in the vain effort to forget her, he had written, and published at his own expense, a book of essays on his travels in Italy, but only to spoil it all by the pregnant dedication, "To C."

Then he had become more desperate, and more noble, and sought distraction among the vulgar beauties of the stage. He was nearly succeeding when his funds threatened to give out, and he was thrown more inexorably than ever into the clutches of his dolorous love for Clarisse.

Then Dick had got it into his good-natured stupid old head that Clarisse and Carter should see more of each other. Carter told him outright that Clarisse troubled him—*intrigued* him, as the Café de la Paix would put it—but the man had simply laughed, and felt a little flattered. Carter thought him a charming ass, but he said no more about it.

Then came the day when Carter saw her with a headache, a neat little white cloth tied about her temples. He had tightened his jaw with the sudden realization of how inevitable she was to him. He was proud of the feelings he had had towards her then, for there had been a note of decided Christian cleanness. He had simply wanted to kiss her on the forehead, to advise her, to smoke big cigars and tell her things. It was a period of uprightness, during which he had maintained the most loyal of attitudes towards her and Dick. And most important, it was an excuse for everything that might follow.

But alas, it had only been a period of transition. Slight touches of her skirt as she whisked by him, her smile, the way she said "no," the night she hurt her ankle and leaned against him—these things had contrived to change him. He wished he could have remained the big brother he had once felt himself to be. But things had turned otherwise, until now . . . he noticed with a shock that the taxi had turned into her street.

Another three minutes! Why did he breathe so? There was no danger. Dick was sure to be away, and even if he were at home there were excuses enough. Another two minutes!

The vividness of the prospective scene renewed his zeal. He saw himself drop down before her, and take her hands, and kiss them . . . kiss them. For once in his life he would be wild, incautious. Perhaps it would stir him into a different sort of life, a careless, vicious existence with a maximum of dash, far from his neat apartment with its cut glass, its quiet rugs and mahogany. Perhaps he could write a novel about it. Perhaps . . . another minute!

He saw himself there on his knees, pleading. It was a delightful morsel to dwell upon. But had she been prepared to love him? Had she gone through a period of resolute indifference, then brave sisterhood, then metamorphosed gently into a woman ripe for the love of him? Perhaps she would feel a monstrous disgust at his advances, and turn away from him with scorn, as from something evil and filthy. Or perhaps she would be wounded, deeply wounded, at the insult he offered her, and would run away from him, frightened and whimpering. She was a good girl, and faithful to her husband. He had no right to expect such unworthy things of her. . . .

There was the house now, the one with the colonial portico. What he had been thinking of was impossible. She was not the sort of woman who yields to other men. The calm, smooth life she led permitted of nothing irregular, nothing out of the way. . . . The taxi stopped.

"Drive through Central Park."

"Yes, sir." The driver's voice was puzzling, as though he took a personal interest in all these numerous scandals which he drove people up to and away from. The taxi leapt ahead.

Crushed! Eternally a man of forethought! Carter was thoroughly sick of himself, as if he were a disagreeable food in his own stomach. He would get drunk. Drunk, faugh! What right did he have to get drunk? Drink is for those whose lives are of sharp edges and deafening crashes. The souls that are impelled to drink climb craggy mountains and topple into abysses that are dizzy, very dizzy. For Carter there was nothing; he was ever a man of careful, deliberate, painstaking forethought. He had had the forethought to see that Clarisse was unattainable; he must pay the penalty with his endless mediocrity of action. . . .

Two days afterwards Dick came rushing into Carter's room, savagely drunk.

"She's gone!" he screamed. "The harlot! She deserted me; she's run off with a movie actor!"

Carter promptly left his room, bought a revolver and some cartridges, loaded the revolver, put it to his head and, being a man of forethought, didn't shoot himself.

THE VISIONARY

By Carter Holliday

I WAS cold.

Snow was falling and the air was harsh.

I longed for the soft, warm arms of a beautiful woman.

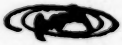
I thought how pleasing the touch of a powdery cheek would be.

I wanted lips on mine.

"How warm and soothing they would feel," I murmured.

"Yes," replied my wife, "I will give them to you." . . .

But my horror as I became aware that I had spoken aloud was checked by the realization that she was referring to my woollen underwear.



THE MINOTAUR

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

I

MEN seldom write their autobiographies until, like Chesterfield, they are dead but have not yet seen fit to announce the melancholy fact; perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say that published memoirs are a sort of polite notice of decease. The spectacular, or dignified career comes to an end; the story of it, destined for a limited and expensive edition, begins. Celebrities shut the book of life in sad resignation and strive to call up a thrill or two out of the past by scribbling. That, at least, is the attitude with which the world accepts "Recollections."

But when John Sedley's publishers announced that they were about to bring forth a volume by him entitled "Confessions: an Autobiography," people gasped. How could a man meet the problems of a vivid present, look to a future that boded much and, besides, take the time to retire into the labyrinth of his memory and, for the benefit of the public, brush away enough cobwebs to present a readable account of his past? Nobody for a moment believed that Sedley had ceased living; he was still a young man, not yet forty, in fact, and still a peril to be reckoned with by all women who were fashionable, beautiful and impressionable—that is, still a peril to those women who had not yet succumbed to his fascination. Even the ladies who *had* given way and had shared unforgettable moments with him ("affaires" with Sedley had always been made up of moments, violent but fleeting, like fashionable diseases) were made anxious by the publishers' announcement; for might he not be too frank, in the account of his most charming lapses? Might he not throw caution to the winds?

One thing could not be denied—that the eccentric business was going to succeed financially. Nobody considered exorbitant the price of the first uniform edition of Sedley's novels, published some months before the "Confessions" were due on the book-stands. The "set" sold in miraculous fashion; and people were already prophesying the whirlwind of gold the autobiography would reap. Meanwhile Sedley had sailed for America for a short stay. He had assured his friends that he would return in time to get his pen out of his pocket and autograph the first copy without causing its owner any grumbling at his dilatoriness.

In New York, Sedley spent much of his time with Ernest Peyton and his wife. Peyton stood for the best in literary tradition in the States. Although he never read books (he would, however, read "Confessions"), he was a collector of priceless first editions. Mrs. Peyton's position was not an easy one. It was her duty to see that her husband's hobby should not bore her guests. Even so succulent a prey as Sedley she managed to free after one lengthy session with Mr. Peyton.

Mrs. Peyton won Sedley's admiration after five minutes' acquaintance. She had remarked to him, "I hear you are a beast straight out of a story-book, with fifty maidens a year your steady diet."

"That implies unwilling sacrifice. Call me a Pied Piper and I shall like it better," he had replied. "The Hamelin children had a wonderful time, you know; they never regretted it."

She laughed, "Are you piping me a tune already?"

From that moment they had been friends.

At the end of a fortnight Sedley and Mrs. Peyton had progressed to that stage of cordial good-fellowship that is yet not quite unequivocal. He had singled her out for brief snatches of talk at dances; he had sat behind her chair during two acts of "Tristan"; he had been one of a small dinner-company at her house.

From the beginning he had felt that New York would loom large in the second volume of "Confessions." At the opera, while Brangaene sent forth her warning, he was formulating phrases about this charming American, phrases that would look well in print—"not beautiful, capricious in the play of feature," "something of the nymph in her, but not more akin to dells, after all, than she of Fragonard's 'Swing'; the sylvan quality a contribution of her dressmaker," "warmly seductive but cool as from a stroll barefoot in the dew," and so on. Too exuberant by half, of course! But his famous descriptions of women always were like that at first; it was his practice to jot down such fancies in the dawning time of passion and to set about revising and tempering in the interval when, ardour spent, he was waiting for a new clarion-call to his senses. He had once dashed off in the heat, "Ah, Actæon! Most blissful of men! Willingly would I accept thy lot, could I but once be present at the unveiling of my Diana." In "Confessions," readers would find not that effusion, but this nonchalant statement: "Lady Diana's beauty was compelling, but not to be examined closely; alas! the kneecaps protruded and the feet bore witness to the daily struggle with slippers too small!"

At Mrs. Peyton's dinner, Sedley had found opportunity to plead for a few moments alone with her.

"Of course, that will be nice," she had answered casually. "Come to see me to-morrow afternoon at five. Nobody will disturb us."

He was punctual. When he entered the drawing-room his hostess flashed him a gay smile; he artfully clouded his answering glance, giving it a quality he would have dubbed "smouldering." She ignored this challenge.

"I have wanted, ever since I met you, to give you a serious talking-to," she began.

"Call it a scolding and be done with it," he responded.

"Very well—if you wish. You are quick at getting the point of what one says; it's about your 'Confessions' I want to talk."

"Ah, my 'Confessions,'" he vaguely sighed. "People are going to be bored with them before ever they see the light."

"You mean by that, don't you, that *I* am going to bore *you* with them? You see, I'm your equal in getting the point of what others say."

They laughed.

"But this isn't going to be the usual scolding," she went on. "I shan't simper at you, to show you I don't mean a word of it. I *do* mean it, every word." She was in earnest; that much he could glimpse.

"No," he shook his head, "I shan't be bored."

"Before I pitch into you," she proceeded, "I shall tell you something for your comfort—I like you, you know."

He leaned forward, expectant. "What is it—this comfort?"

"Why, I've already told you," she returned, "that I like you. That's it."

"Oh, I see." He showed his chagrin. "I hoped for a more powerful anæsthetic."

She adopted the admonitory tone, to let him know she had done with her preamble and was giving him his lesson.

"Naturally you think a good deal of your reputation, as an author and a gentleman. Well, when you look at the matter clear-headedly, doesn't it strike you that to give up the idea of printing these memoirs would help your career? They will be a sensation, I grant; but you'll find in another year you will be

out of date. People will realize they have made a fad of you; and what fad ever lasted out a twelvemonth? Don't make yourself the fashion of the day; you sign your own death-warrant when you put yourself in a class with the latest cravats. This book will go off like a rocket; there will be a big fuss. And then—you will find yourself quite in the dark. Your 'Confessions' will be a burnt stick. You will be done for."

She paused.

"There, now! Haven't I given voice to your own foreboding? Isn't it true that everyone dotes on gentlemen with vague, wicked pasts; and isn't it equally true that there's a certain etiquette making these gentlemen keep the past vague? I learned so in my convent days."

He nodded his head at her and pursed his lips, almost as if he were treating himself to an inaudible whistle.

"My respect for you is immense, after that," he told her. "I shan't attempt to argue; you are dead right. Need I add that I shan't pay the slightest attention to your advice?"

He had not taken his eyes off her for several moments. There was a long silence while their gaze held.

He was the first to speak. "Don't you know that we writers do good work until we are thirty-five and then admit we are beaten? What we want is adulation, even if it's only for a little while. We all cheapen ourselves in those critical years between thirty-five and forty. We can't stand reaching middle-age with our heads still unturned. It is tragic to see clearly at forty; one doesn't when one's head is turned."

"Very pretty," she commented, "but it doesn't apply to you. You have had your adulation before this; you would continue to have it if you worked out your destiny fairly, legitimately."

"Fairly, legitimately," he mocked. "I'm afraid you haven't read my novels. I've always pandered, more or less, but I haven't pandered enough to give me the big *flair* I crave. Now I mean to have my hour."

"I give you up then," she said. "I see you are beyond recall."

She got up and moved about vaguely for a time, before adopting the inevitable graceful pose in front of the mantel. He followed her and stood beside her, one elbow on the shelf.

"Since you refuse to listen to my warnings," she announced, "tell me a little about the dreadful book. Do you keep nothing back?"

"Nothing."

"What do you call the ladies? Do you invent fetching, symbolic titles for them?"

"No, I call them by their own first names. I leave last names out of account."

"That is thoughtful." She mused a bit. "But surely some of the poor creatures have had unique names. Would it be fair to print them unaltered?"

"I don't know; I've done so, however. The first chapter immortalizes the loveliest lady of them all, one Hyacinth."

"Hyacinth!" she exclaimed. "It's a silly, saccharine name."

"It's quite the sweetest name," he protested.

"Hyacinth," she repeated. She shook her head. "All sweet-scented things are insipid."

Before she quite realized what was happening he had caught her to him and kissed her. Flushed and tremulous, she drew away.

"Tell me your name and forgive me," he pleaded as she moved towards the door.

On the threshold she turned.

"Mary Ann," she said and smiled with him. Pointedly she avoided answering the other half of his request; but it was evident that forgiveness was in the air.

II

It was but natural, after the first intimate talk, that Sedley should come often of an afternoon to see the de-

lightful Mary Ann Peyton. One thing alone marred his serenity: she kept him smouldering, as it were; one flash of real ardour from him led every time to a gentle but firm dismissal. He did not quite give up hope, but he began to suffer from an altogether novel if vague sense of discouragement. To gentle caresses and light hand-clasps she would submit; she was like a cat that invites stroking but flashes out of reach when one tries to take it upon one's lap.

One day she announced with a smile, "I don't propose to wait until your book comes out. I must have a peep right off."

He shook his head. "I don't approve of dress-rehearsals."

"Very well." She was incisive. "Then I shan't be at home the next time you call."

"I don't believe you; you wouldn't take such a mean revenge. That would be petty, when you know I am acting on principle."

"You!" She held up her hands in deprecation. "You admit you prostitute your muse; and then you talk of principle. That won't do."

"I assure you I am in earnest," he pursued. "I haven't ever shown my wares myself."

"I am obdurate." She gave him a glance of challenge.

He wavered. "Come, then—a compromise!"

"Well, tell me your plan. I can't promise you yet how I shall take it."

"I shall show you one chapter—no more." There was decision in his tone.

"One chapter!" She thought it over for a moment. "All right," she said a last. "But it must be the best chapter of all. I count on you as a man of honour not to fool me."

"That is easy to pick," he said. "The first outdistances all the others. It sings of Dame Hyacinth, lovely lady of sweet-scented name. I shall bring it along with me to-morrow."

"Thank you." She let her eyes droop from his. "She was the first?"

He nodded. "She was all my young dreams bursting into flower—quite like Prince Arthur and the Faerie Queene."

"Poor Hyacinth. You know, I'm getting fond of the name, after all. Where is she now? What is she now? Of course, she is the mother of a large family, with sons at Oxford or Cambridge. For all that, she is a tragic figure. First loves always are. It's too bad girls like that don't pine away and die exquisitely at eighteen. Sentimental novelists *have* a sense of values; isn't it so?"

"You must wait and read what was the end of my Hyacinth," he responded, with a sigh.

"Unfortunately, I am sophisticated. If I find her wilting on my hands to-morrow, I shall feel that you have let dreams intrude on the facts. Memoirs shouldn't do that."

"Every word of the story is true," he persisted. "In this case, dreams and fact were of a piece, deliciously blended."

She, too, sighed. "There is no romance in me! 'Deliciously blended' sounded to me at once like the tobacco in a new brand of cigarettes."

"If you read my chapter in that spirit, I shall never forgive you," he let her know. "It's a bit of high romance, medieval in its spirit; it is also the record of genuine feeling."

"Don't be alarmed," she replied. "I shan't be vulgar. I even feel that I shall succumb to the spell." She leaned slightly forward. "You will read it to me, please."

"The spell!" he said softly. "*La Belle Dame sans merci* hath me in thrall." He cupped her chin with one hand and kissed her. This time there was no resistance for a perceptible space. She turned away at last with the words, "To-morrow! Sweet, silly Hyacinth."

III

He began his reading at a moment perfectly attuned to the note of reverie he put into his voice. It was late in the afternoon; the steady usurping of

daylight by dusk was almost visible. It was as if one could watch the subtle mingling, as if one were looking on at a sort of cosmic experiment of pouring one drop of a strong chemical substance into a vast vessel filled with clear liquid. The light of the late winter day had this quality of a thin, scintillant fluid that in an instant becomes clouded. Sedley, near a window, focussed the pale radiance on the page before him; Mrs. Peyton, a few feet from him, was in shadow.

"I like the custom our grandmothers had of keeping all that was precious locked away, of unwrapping the silver paper from their treasures on a great occasion and displaying them with reverence to the chosen, while the odour of lavender permeated the air; such times were in a sense ritualistic, with the odour from the altar of a purity and sanctity unknown to heathen deities. Cytherea of the Roses knew it not; lavender is the essence of maidenhood, austere and Puritan-like. I trust that my readers, opening this book at the first chapter, will find their senses charmed as by the fragrance from the wardrobe containing the wedding-dress of some sedate ancestor. For my Hyacinth has for me to-day the value of a priceless possession which I unwrap from its silver paper for the chosen. Let those who scorn sentiment begin their reading at the second chapter; they are not the chosen."

Sedley looked up from his reading. Mrs. Peyton, with eyes half-closed in the twilight, did not notice his action. Well content, he returned to his page and went on to the end without attempting again to draw her attention away from the table.

"Late one summer day, I lounged under an ilex tree at Florac. My gaze was not on the villas around me nor on the winding road before me; nor was it on the middle distance. It soared without a drop over the steep precipice where I was perched, soared past the hoary olive trees and fields below and came to rest, like a gull, on the distant sea. Imagine, if you can, lapis-lazuli translucent and lit with a sunbeam's sheen and you will have in mind something of the beauty of the far-away sea. It was almost evening; day was getting weary; the wings were closing over the feathery breast. It was the hour for memory to assert her sway; but then I did not know it, for I was twenty-one.

"I was annoyed to hear a trap approaching. Why are we always annoyed by the sound of an oncoming happiness? At the end of an hour I had christened the horse Pegasus! Fifty feet away, the vehicle stopped; a girl stepped out and sauntered lazily towards me. I got all this out of the tail of my eye, for I still strove to ignore everything but the view. Before I knew it, however, my gaze had begun to dip back, with a certain limpness, from the water where it had come to rest; it alighted on the top of a eucalyptus tree, half-swooped and half-scampered up the rocks and scurried along the road until it stopped, for all the world like a lame robin, at the feet of the girl, now very near. Ankles slender as a young birch! But what an ass I was, to let them interfere with my high flight of musing and my beautiful similes.

"I got to my feet, as she came to a full stop just outside the shelter of my ilex bower.

"'I beg your pardon,' I exclaimed. 'I'm afraid I've blundered on your post for the evening watch.'

"'Not at all,' she assured me. 'I've never been here before. It *is* beautiful. It was stupid of me not to discover it till now.'

"Her glance over her shoulder was but a cursory one; it disappointed me. Could it be she was satisfied with one look at the glories around her? Besides, I could not examine her with sufficient care if she did not let her imagination wander beyond our casual conversation. It would be rude to take in all her points unless her attention were distracted; but alas! her mind was

not for the landscape. She wanted to chat.

"I gave up my higher purpose. It was not discouraging after all. I found I could be voluble and still swiftly-appraising. She was charming. Very tall and thin, she was saved from lankness by the fluent plasticity of her limbs. It was patent that she would boast well-oiled sockets! Thank God, the frame was small; she was not the raw-boned type that must in after years 'fill out' to be presentable. Her head was small and set with exquisite precision on her long neck. And that neck was beyond measure lovely, full and with a delicate swell towards the centre, like a perfect column. She was a sketch, daring, incomplete; in the poise of her maturity, one would miss the broad strokes, would sigh in presence of subtle modulations and wish again for the cruder promise.

"I learned that she was lonely, that her parents were in London and had left her behind with her old governess, Miss Willoughby. Of course, she would be delighted to see me at any time.

"That was all. I think we both felt, when we had done our chattering, that somehow we were on a dream-threshold. We two in Florac, with only an old governess between us! There was a peculiar skip, a dizzy swing to my heart when I helped her into her trap and said good-night.

"Just a week later, we sat under the same ilex tree and talked in delicious, low-thrilling tones of our love for each other. I have never known anything like her response when she felt a kiss imminent. She would sway slightly, the free curve of her neck accentuated, and would await the descent of my lips upon hers; the effect was compelling, and the motion, I'm sure, like that of Narcissus's image yearning up to the surface of the pool. The surprising thing was that she acted in all simplicity. She was artless, ardent, unafraid."

So the narrative went. It by no means lived up to the promise of the first page. Even the day-spring of love in Hyacinth and John Sedley was a far cry from lavender and grandmothers' wedding-gowns. The author had failed; from the vantage-ground of thirty-five, he was looking back on a pure idyll. He was unable to escape from his cynicism, powerless to get himself under the skin of his young prime. The atmosphere was all of delightful, unscrupulous intrigue. The peculiar thing about it was that readers of "Confessions" would understand Hyacinth, in spite of Sedley, and would know he was being unfair to her.

No one could deny, however, the entertaining audacity of the story; it was of a frankness to make publication out of the question for anyone but a man of extraordinary fame. Occasionally there would be a clear note of sincerity, but not often. The savour was of "Mademoiselle de Maupin" for the most part. It was matter for conjecture whether the stress at the start on simplicity and innocence were fine irony or whether Sedley had actually hoodwinked himself into believing what he said.

The end was abrupt, conventional. Hyacinth's parents had returned, "a rich suitor in tow." In mournful resignation, the lovers had watched the party from London, jouncing up the steep hill towards them. Then they had parted.

"Marriage had been out of the question from the beginning," the chapter wound up. "My prospects were like a cloud-rack, rich in pictorial suggestiveness, but vapoury and ever-shifting. Throughout our month of fulfilment the future had meant nothing to us. We had shrugged it away. At the moment of our first kiss, we had known what the end would be. I suspect, though, that my pride was hurt at the dénouement; I had been planning an exit more graceful! One *does* wish the credit of taking the decisive step oneself.

"Hyacinth remains for me the sweet, evocative creature of old. My Para-

dise would be a green wood, full of lisping rills and numerous solitudes, with, just beyond my reach, Hyacinth fleeing away, not to be rid of me, but to arrive before me at the deepest grotto of all, there to make my reception a perfect one.

"I returned to Florac some years later. Tidings of her I did not expect. I learned that she was dead. It was with a heavy heart I returned to Plessy. During tea with Lady Virginia (of whom, more anon) Hyacinth at eighteen filled my thoughts."

IV

"THAT is charming," came Mrs. Peyton's voice from the deepening gloom, "She had married the suitor, I suppose?"

"Yes, poor child; but she was a true heroine after all. She could not breathe on the earth, once she had tasted the wine of the heights. She must have panted her life away."

As he spoke he weighed his words and decided to jot them down directly he got home. They merited publication.

"And you really feel that you meant so much to her. May not chagrin have killed her? She must have felt the slight, must have known you had only played with her."

"No, no," he said, "you do not understand."

"True," she admitted. "I don't wish to offend you; but wasn't her taste of this wine just a sip, not enough to hurt?"

"Aren't you forgetting," he reminded her, "that in a month's time she experienced everything, to put it baldly?"

"Do you call one kiss, under a governess's very nose, everything?"

"What can you mean—one kiss?" He was stupefied.

"How silly of me!" she exclaimed. "I did forget the story; I was thinking of—something quite different."

"What *can* you mean?" he repeated. "What were you thinking of?"

"Of the truth behind the affected tale—Confess! You saw her twice; you kissed her once and frightened her away. Am I right?"

Indignation and a baffling sense of insecurity before her left him powerless to meet the question.

"Your readers will suspect you've lied to them; there's a false ring to it all. I should have doubted at once, if I hadn't known."

Still he gazed and was speechless.

"A man does not forget a sweetheart or a mistress—even after ten years," she said. "The proof of your story's falsity is that you have not, do not yet, recognize *me*." That brought him to his feet.

"You—*you* are my Hyacinth!" There was furious protest in his tone. Pitilessly she had called him out of the world of beauty, had driven him back to dreary reality.

Mrs. Peyton got up and switched on the lights. The situation should have struck him as comic; but it bewildered him, angered him too much for that.

"Good sense has altered my looks," she said, "besides thirty pounds' gain in weight and a more competent maid."

She took in with composure his air of fiery petulance.

"I shan't be stern, because you've given me a jolly time this afternoon," she went on. "And you *do* look ashamed of yourself. You recall now, don't you, that we saw each other just twice? To think our one and only kiss, under Miss Willoughby's very nose, too, should be the foundation of that scandalous chapter! I like your description of me as a girl; but I wasn't so charming. I was too thin; I *was* the type that must fill out to pass muster. Don't you remember? I sprawled over more space in those days than I should have."

It was true. Fiction and sophisticated romanticism had so wrought upon Sedley that he had for years been thrusting aside the true details of his idyll. He had shut his eyes to fact and had constructed a tale of young love as experience and worldliness had taught him such a thing should be.

For a decade he had been turning it over in his mind. He had come to believe the fabric of exquisite lies; he had grown to know intensely his Hyacinth of well-oiled sockets, to live with her scenes out of his imagination.

Until the moment when Mrs. Peyton destroyed the whole dream, he had believed the story and had loved his unconscionable ingénue. It was indeed annoying to be brought up short like this. For the moment, he suffered bitter disillusionment; then his sense of the ridiculous began to struggle up to the surface. The real Hyacinth had been rather a dauby sketch, after all; yes, she had been awkward and absurdly shy. She was so vague in his mind that he gave up trying to bring her back out of the misty past. His lady of dreams had been so captivating! It was small wonder Mrs. Peyton had failed to set his memory working. He had never been really awake to his lovely heroine until he had forgotten the silly girl of Florac. He would have to give weeks to the most careful examination of Mrs. Peyton before he should have a clear picture of the school-miss he had kissed but once.

She gave way to uncontrollable laughter; in a moment he had himself sufficiently in hand to join in without too jarring a note.

"I have been so curious to hear what you'd written of me," she announced at last. "I felt I must get at your Hyacinth hymn before it was printed. Well, I managed it; I've even, with that in view, let you kiss me; but I never suspected the thing would be like that." She waved a hand at his manuscript.

"You must go now," she went on. "I shan't be at home to you any more. That much I owe my pride. But do come and talk to me in public—at dances and so on. It will do you good to drop your mask once in a while."

There was no trace of embarrassment in her rambling sentences. It was evident that she was enjoying her "coup."

"By the way," she turned on the threshold. "You have my permission to print the chapter. My name *is* Mary Ann; Hyacinth was one of my nonsensical fads at eighteen. My husband, too, knows nothing of Florac; he isn't 'the rich suitor in tow.'"

When he was alone Sedley remarked, "I'll be damned!" Then he smiled. Ever since Mrs. Peyton had switched on the lights, he had been mutely comparing the woman with his young girl. Mary Ann had suffered by juxtaposition with the Hyacinth of "Confessions." That in itself was revenge enough. He preferred young romance and excessive slenderness. And he had another month of New York and its women before him.

It is but fair to Sedley to add this, that Lady Virginia and the rest of the damsels celebrated in "Confessions" could pick no flaws in the accounts he had given of them. Beginning with chapter the second, the scandalous chronicles were all without a fillip of fiction.

THE average woman knows all there is to be known about her husband before she has been married three months. The average man may celebrate his golden wedding without understanding his wife better than the day he married her.

FOUR FRIENDS OF MAVIS

By Vincent Starrett

I

LOOKING down upon Cartwright through the skylight, Clavering could well believe that his friend was mad. The artist stood in the centre of his studio floor and, with a naked sword, slashed viciously at a canvas hung from the ceiling by ropes of plaited silk. The picture was that of a woman, full length, and the face already had been cut to ribbons. A hideous grin distorted the swordsman's features; he postured violently, drew back, lunged and recovered, all in a breath. Clavering noted with a shudder that the latest stroke had pierced the heart-spot of the portrait. He turned to Gifford in amazement; a whimsical smile sat upon the sculptor's lips.

"You see?" Gifford's query seemed to suggest that *now*, perhaps, his friend would believe.

"Incredible!" Clavering whispered.

"So I thought. He has been this way for months."

"But what can have happened?"

"It is hard to be sure, of course, and I am not an alienist—but you recognize the portrait?"

"The face is cut to pieces." Clavering stared in at the swaying canvas, with wrinkled brow.

"So it is. Yesterday it was not. It is a portrait of Mavis Onsrud!"

Clavering sucked in his breath. He looked quickly at his friend, comprehension in his glance. Then he turned his eyes back to the artist, who had again freed the sword from the painted folds of a dress. The swordsman drew an arc of steel in the air; a transitory halo flashed about his head. He passed, lunged, recovered. The canvas now hung in strips from its frame. Gifford looked at his watch.

"The performance is about over," he said, in guarded tones. "Let us go."

When they had entered the street, he added:

"Every morning from 9 until 12 he paints a portrait of Mavis Onsrud. Every afternoon from 1 until 4 he hacks it to pieces."

The sculptor stopped and looked at his friend with concern. Clavering was white and shaking.

"My dear chap," he continued, less lightly, "I had no idea it would affect you so powerfully. But Cartwright, you know, is my friend, also."

"I was not thinking of Cartwright—not altogether."

"Hm-m! I beg your pardon! I had forgotten your own affair with Mavis. At least, I thought *you* had forgotten it."

"It still stabs a bit," weakly confessed the musician. "But what about Cartwright? Why does he . . . ?"

"I don't know," frankly answered the other. "Manifestly, something unhappy has occurred. I did not bring you to-day to hurt you, but to convince you. You have no further scruples, surely?"

Clavering's mouth set in a straight, hard line.

"None whatever!"

"Good! And you will help me?"

"At once, if you like."

"Well, not quite that early. To-morrow, though. You will see Cartwright to-night, of course. Would it be easier if I went with you?"

"Not so easy. He would suspect.

No, you must join us at the train—your first plan is best."

"Good old Clavering," said Gifford, affectionately. "Until to-morrow, then. Good-bye, old chap."

Clavering did not wait for nightfall. Instead, he turned at once to the artist's studio and knocked. Then he entered. The room was in semi-darkness, but there was light enough from the skylight and the windows for him to see things clearly. The musician was staggered. All signs of the recent wrath had vanished; even the silken ropes had been taken down. The sword hung in its accustomed place, under the military cap and epaulettes of a model. On a camp stool near the central window sat Cartwright, crying softly into a book. Clavering advanced quickly and took the volume from his hand. It was a Presbyterian Hymnal.

II

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Having passed through the arcade and under the arched doorway, Gifford and Mavis Onsrud ensconced themselves in one of the compartments, where they had a full view of the front door, and Gifford ordered for both. The sculptor was in high spirits.

"Seven o'clock and all is well," he smiled into the eyes of his companion.

"How do you know?" she asked, quickly. "It is four hours since you left them. Anything may have happened."

"Nothing of importance. Cartwright is an ass, but he has learned his part well enough. It was quite thrilling to watch him, this afternoon. Clavering's hair was on end and, I confess, I was moved myself."

Miss Onsrud laughed silverly.

"Poor Clavering," she observed. "I really feel very sorry for him. I am afraid I am much to blame."

"You could not help it," the sculptor assured her. "And this plan of yours for his removal is wonderful; a plot for a movie. I hope Cartwright does not weaken."

Miss Onsrud's oblique eyes regarded her companion narrowly. Then her lips tightened with determination. She spoke abruptly.

"You may as well understand all of this, Harold," she said. "Forgive me for having deceived you in one matter, but—Cartwright is going, too!"

Gifford dropped his fork with a clatter. His mouth opened and closed—slowly—twice.

"W-h-a-t!"

His companion nodded; her glance was almost coquettish.

"You never guessed that Cartwright, too . . . ?"

"Good Heavens! No!"

"You have been too concerned about poor old Clavering. It did not occur to you that Cartwright's quiet melancholy was quite as dangerous a manifestation as Clavering's alcoholic predilections. And, of course, neither of them suspected the other; that is natural."

Gifford continued to stare at her with horrified eyes.

"What is Cartwright's trouble?" he managed to ask, at length.

"Involutional melancholia, the doctors call it. He believes himself a desperate sinner and exaggerates his most trivial carelessnesses. My rejection, he says, was the final proof that heavenly favour had been removed from him. He is quiet enough, of course, but his case is progressive and probably incurable."

"Good Lord!" said the shocked sculptor. "Both of them!"

"If it were not so tragic, it would be funny," commented Miss Onsrud. "That is, the situation in a story would be funny. Two madmen headed for the state hospital, each knowing the other's madness, each believing himself sane, each leading the other to incarceration."

"And I have been longing for an opportunity to congratulate Cartwright upon his magnificent acting this afternoon. His sword play was terrific."

"Do so, of course, if opportunity offers. Neither must suspect that he is playing a false part. A slip may involve undreamed-of difficulties. Both, I am sure, would fight."

"This is a shocking thing for you, Mavis."

"I sometimes wonder that I retain my own reason, particularly when I realize how much I am to blame for it all. But I cannot give my love to everybody!" she ended, passionately.

Gifford placed his hand over hers and bore down hard. His eyes burned with a feverish light.

"Mavis!" he whispered.

Her glance fell before his. He leaned forward with a sudden movement; the elbow of the compartment partially concealed them. Miss Onsrud drew back.

"To-morrow," she warned, in a low voice. "Not to-night. I can't bear it to-night."

As he walked away in the darkness, after having left Miss Onsrud at her apartment, the sculptor shivered. A sharp breeze had sprung up from nowhere; he felt cold, yet paradoxically his veins were fire, and in his brain a flame flickered and danced. His thoughts were confused and incoherent. To-morrow he would take a train with his two oldest friends, upon a journey the like of which surely had never been known. Would he ever see them again? Little vignettes of former happinesses, in their company, came to him in revealing flashes. When he thought of Mavis Onsrud, it was of her farewell pressure on his arm; the touch of her finger-tips on his hand. He shuddered again, and his hand seemed to burn. A curious revulsion had seized him. For the moment he almost hated her.

III

STEPPING into a glittering buffet, on his way home from the theatre, shortly before midnight, Denslow, the actor, found Clavering at the bar. The musician was drinking steadily. His eyes glittered like those of a cat; his movements had much of the lithe vigour of that sinister animal. Liquor, upon Clavering, had a unique effect. In his present mood, Denslow knew, the musician could kill a man with his hands, or, with the same hands, at the piano, improvise supernal music.

The actor took his stand beside the drinker.

"You are opening magic casements, I perceive," he quietly remarked.

"Hello, Denny," greeted Clavering, without surprise. "Don't hesitate to join me. They are French windows, through which we may step into ancient oblivion. I have a hard day's work before me to-morrow; I fain would forget it."

"A novel way to prepare for a day of work," remarked the actor, quaintly, pouring himself a drink. "You will not rise before noon."

"If I were to go to bed, I feel that I should never rise again. So I shall not go to bed."

"*Quod erat demonstrandum*," said Denslow, sententiously. "You are a wizard for cutting Gordian knots, Dick. In your mind, the solution follows hard on the heels of the problem.

I don't know, however, that I ought to permit you to kill yourself."

"You are alone in that sentiment. Have no fears, though. It is not I who am to die. Do you see that maudlin animal in the velour hat? There is a mechanical piano there at the back of the room; it plays 'The Stars and Stripes March,' by Lieut. Sousa, 'Tipperary,' of disputed authorship, and a 'Girls Will Be Girls' medley, upon the small provocation of a nickel. Our friend in velour has a nervous eye upon it, and I suspect he is fingering a nickel in his pocket. At his first move in the direction of the instrument, I shall spring upon him and throttle him."

Clavering spoke humorously, but there was a dangerous gleam in his eye. Denslow had no fears for the young man in the velour hat, who obviously was only an excuse for Clavering's bitterness. That something oppressed the musician was patent, however. The actor felt it his duty to get him away.

"Don't be a fool, Clavering," he admonished whimsically. "Pick up your change and let's get out of here. I've been cooped up all evening and I need some air. Will you walk?"

The musician was cheered by the actor's companionship. With surprising readiness, he consented. For a time they walked slowly in the darkness, without reference to direction.

"What are you up to to-morrow, Clavering?" demanded the actor, at last.

Clavering turned a shrewd glance upon his friend.

Denslow's face expressed no particular curiosity or interest. He was apparently making conversation. The musician resolved to shock him.

"You know Cartwright?"

"The painter? Very well indeed."

"Gifford and I are taking him to an asylum!"

Denslow jerked.

"You don't mean it!"

"I'm sorry to say I do," contritely added Clavering. "And the worst of it is, he doesn't know he's going. The poor chap thinks he's going down into the country with us for a few weeks. He's mad as a hatter, Denslow. With my own eyes I saw him hacking to pieces a portrait he had painted of Mavis Onsrud; with a sword! I had the sweet task of prevailing upon him to go."

"Mavis Onsrud! Does she—does she know?"

"I think not. I hope not! It was Gifford's plan."

"Gifford is so disinterested," sarcastically observed the actor.

"No, no, Denny," cried Clavering, seriously. "You do him an injustice. I confess, I thought that, too, at first. I tell you I saw him, myself, cutting up the picture . . . and I saw his face. The maddest thing you can imagine!"

A silence fell between them. Denslow seemed to be thinking deeply.

"I'm sorry," he said, at last.

Clavering squeezed his shoulder affectionately.

"So am I, old chap," he answered; after which they walked again in silence.

They were approaching the north branch of the river; the bridge lights gleamed dully through a faint shroud of fog. In the shadow of a pillar a man stood. His head was bent forward; his shoulders hunched. He was looking down into the inky stream. As they came nearer and their footfalls rang on the stone walk, the man looked up. They saw that it was Gifford, the sculptor.

The man who had been looking into the river essayed a smile; he greeted Denslow with mock effusion. He shook hands with both the newcomers. The actor sensed tragedy in the air, and assumed a jovial attitude.

"I have just saved Clavering from drinking himself to death," he vouchsafed, "and it would seem that I am just in time to preserve my friend Gifford from a watery grave. Were you going in head—or feet—first, Harold?"

Gifford grinned feebly.

"You are nearer to the truth than you imagine, Denny," he replied. "While I don't believe I would have

actually jumped in, the thought was somewhere in the back of my head. It fascinated me to think that such a thought was possible to me, however vaguely."

"It is not like you to be despondent. Now, if a five-spot will help . . . ?" Denslow was cheerily smiling; there was mockery in his tones. The sculptor responded beautifully.

"No," he laughed, squaring his shoulders. "I'm not hard up. Nor, for that matter, am I particularly despondent. But I have a nasty task ahead of me, in the morning, as Clavering will testify. It has set me to wondering about the worth-whileness of many things."

"Ah, Clavering spoke of something of the sort."

"I told him what we had to do, Gifford," said the musician. "I'm pretty well broken up, myself."

"Where did you leave Cartwright?" asked the sculptor.

"In his rooms. He wouldn't come to supper. He will be ready by seven o'clock."

"Poor fellow," said Gifford. "I really can't congratulate you, Clavering."

"I'm not proud of myself," the musician responded brusquely, "but surely the responsibility is not all mine?"

"On the contrary, it is very nearly all mine."

"There is no other way?" asked Denslow.

"None! We have had the best advice. It is for his own good; we are assured of that. It is a grain of comfort."

"It is as well that I picked you chaps up to-night," Denslow observed, "or you might also have been candidates for the hospital. You had best go home, both of you."

"If Clavering cares to come with me," suggested the sculptor, "I'll be glad for his company."

"I was thinking of something of the sort," the musician responded.

"Good-night, then," said the actor, "and please slap old Cartwright on the back for me."

Clavering had turned his back and was looking down into the river as Gifford had done before him. The sculptor took advantage of this opportunity to look significantly at Denslow; then he jerked his head, imperceptibly almost, in the direction of the musician. Denslow's eyes opened wide; he only half comprehended, it seemed. Gifford winked slowly.

"Good Lord!" cried the actor, as he trudged off in the darkness. "Good Lord!"

After a few minutes he lighted a cigar and increased his pace. It occurred to him that he was not far from Cartwright's studio, and he determined to pass it. He had only half done so, however, when the door of the studio building suddenly opened, and the artist himself stood upon the steps. Over his ordinary garb he had thrown a long cape; a felt hat was pulled low over his eyes, and he flourished a stick briskly.

Cartwright glanced up and down the street, either way; then he looked down and beheld Denslow at the bottom of the stairs. He expressed no emotion at the meeting.

"Couldn't sleep," he explained, morosely, when the ordinary greetings had been exchanged. "Thought I'd take a walk and wind up at Gifford's. You've heard about poor old Clavering."

"Something," admitted the other, guardedly. "I didn't like to believe what I heard."

"Nothing else to believe," declared the painter. "I'd disbelieve it, if I could. He tried to kill his housekeeper. If *we* hadn't taken him in hand, it would have been the police. It's a rotten business."

"You leave in the morning?"

"The train leaves at eight-thirty, I believe. Gifford has made all plans; I wish he'd left me out of them. He's had me acting like a madman for some days past, just to deceive Clavering. Clavering thinks he is taking me into the country for a few weeks, and actually I'm taking him to an asylum. It was pitiful to hear him this after-

No, you must join us at the train—your first plan is best."

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actually jumped in, the thought was somewhere in the back of my head. It fascinated me to think that such a thought was possible to me, however vaguely."

"It is not like you to be despondent. Now, if a five-spot will help . . . ?" Denslow was cheerily smiling; there was mockery in his tones. The sculptor responded beautifully.

"No," he laughed, squaring his shoulders. "I'm not hard up. Nor, for that matter, am I particularly despondent. But I have a nasty task ahead of me, in the morning, as Clavering will testify. It has set me to wondering about the worth-whileness of many things."

"Ah, Clavering spoke of something of the sort."

"I told him what we had to do, Gifford," said the musician. "I'm pretty well broken up, myself."

"Where did you leave Cartwright?" asked the sculptor.

"In his rooms. He wouldn't come to supper. He will be ready by seven o'clock."

"Poor fellow," said Gifford. "I really can't congratulate you, Clavering."

"I'm not proud of myself," the musician responded brusquely, "but surely the responsibility is not all mine?"

"On the contrary, it is very nearly all mine."

"There is no other way?" asked Denslow.

"None! We have had the best advice. It is for his own good; we are assured of that. It is a grain of comfort."

"It is as well that I picked you chaps up to-night," Denslow observed, "or you might also have been candidates for the hospital. You had best go home, both of you."

"If Clavering cares to come with me," suggested the sculptor, "I'll be glad for his company."

"I was thinking of something of the sort," the musician responded.

"Good-night, then," said the actor, "and please slap old Cartwright on the back for me."

Clavering had turned his back and was looking down into the river as Gifford had done before him. The sculptor took advantage of this opportunity to look significantly at Denslow; then he jerked his head, imperceptibly almost, in the direction of the musician. Denslow's eyes opened wide; he only half comprehended, it seemed. Gifford winked slowly.

"Good Lord!" cried the actor, as he trudged off in the darkness. "Good Lord!"

After a few minutes he lighted a cigar and increased his pace. It occurred to him that he was not far from Cartwright's studio, and he determined to pass it. He had only half done so, however, when the door of the studio building suddenly opened, and the artist himself stood upon the steps. Over his ordinary garb he had thrown a long cape; a felt hat was pulled low over his eyes, and he flourished a stick briskly.

Cartwright glanced up and down the street, either way; then he looked down and beheld Denslow at the bottom of the stairs. He expressed no emotion at the meeting.

"Couldn't sleep," he explained, morosely, when the ordinary greetings had been exchanged. "Thought I'd take a walk and wind up at Gifford's. You've heard about poor old Clavering."

"Something," admitted the other, guardedly. "I didn't like to believe what I heard."

"Nothing else to believe," declared the painter. "I'd disbelieve it, if I could. He tried to kill his housekeeper. If *we* hadn't taken him in hand, it would have been the police. It's a rotten business."

"You leave in the morning?"

"The train leaves at eight-thirty, I believe. Gifford has made all plans; I wish he'd left me out of them. He's had me acting like a madman for some days past, just to deceive Clavering. Clavering thinks he is taking me into the country for a few weeks, and actually I'm taking him to an asylum. It was pitiful to hear him this after-

noon, when he thought he was talking me into going. I couldn't fall in with his plans too readily, and I couldn't discourage them when it was arranged that ultimately I was to consent."

"I don't envy you," said Denslow, as he moved off. "Good-night, Cartwright. I think you'll find Gifford at home."

"Good-night," growled the painter, and flung himself angrily down the street.

The actor looked after him for a moment; then he resumed his cigar and his homeward journey. A dim light burned in his apartment, when he entered. He did not turn it up. With easy deliberation, he removed his outer garments and turned to the telephone.

When the operator answered him, he gave her Miss Onsrud's number.

IV

THREE madmen calmly delivered themselves over to the superintendent of the state asylum, shortly before noon on the following morning, each with a furtive eye upon the other, wondering when his suspicion would begin to dawn. In narrating the life stories of Peter Cartwright, Richard Clavering and Harold Gifford, for the records of the institution, Robert Denslow was as charitable to his friends as circumstances would permit.

ABSOLUTION

By Willard Wattles

ONCE I was bound in slavery
But now my sins have set me free.

No matter what the songs have sung
It is my sins have kept me young;

When cruelly my heart inclined
My own dead sins have made me kind:

It's some are blind, and some are wise,
But only sins have gentle eyes;

'Twas little recked the brittle thong
When my sins woke to shake me strong;

And when I face the certain grave
It is my sins have made me brave. . . .

In Heaven beside the jasper sea
The sins of Christ will pardon me.

AN ENCHIRIDION FOR CYNICS

By Winthrop Parkhurst

I

IN the Spring a young woman's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of how she can make some man believe he loves her.

II

It is easy to meet temptations bravely. Saying good-bye to them is what hurts.

III

Before a woman is thirty she looks eagerly forward to her first great love affair. After she is thirty she looks eagerly back to it.

IV

All cynical observations to the contrary, a woman's affections never vary. All that varies is the object of them.

V

Women are serpents. The only antidote for their bite is alcohol.

VI

In a love intrigue man proposes, woman disposes, the devil exposes.

VII

The way of the transgressor is just hard enough to make transgressing delightful.

VIII

Marriages are made in Heaven. This is not surprising. So was Hell.

THE OSTRACIZED VIRTUE

By M. A. Brooks

A MINISTER'S daughter ran away with a man whom her father disliked.

When it became known, her father raged in a high fury. His patient wife, in tears, begged for forgiveness for their daughter.

"Remember," she said, "the text of your last Sunday's sermon, 'Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the greatest of these is Charity!'"

The minister thought for a moment, then lifted his head slowly with a noble smile softening his harsh features.

"You are right, mother," he faltered. "The Magdalene was forgiven. Even so shall I forgive our Myrtle." And in great joy the mother hastened from the room.

"Myrtle," began the minister impressively, as she returned with the girl, "you have sinned, but you are forgiven. You may return to my house on condition that you never see that man again. I shall cut down your allowance as a matter of precaution, but with all the charity of my soul, my child, I forgive you."

Having uttered these magnanimous words, he was about to clasp his daughter to his heart, but she drew back.

"But, papa," she said with dignity, "I have not sinned. I am married. In justice you must admit—"

"Justice," shrieked her father, waving his arms and growing purple, "what have I to do with justice? If you are married to that man, leave this room, leave this house, never let me see your face again! Justice, indeed!" And he swore several times.

THE SINGER

By Margaret Leroy

I MADE songs yesterday—
To-day I cannot sing.
There is not in all the world more grey
And crushed and dumb a thing.

Yet these dull and slow folk know
That I am not as they—
However pale and quiet I go,
I made songs yesterday!

LE FORÇAT

By Edmond Labaye

UN sac sur l'épaule, il errait sur la route, en quête d'un mauvais coup à faire. Depuis qu'il s'était échappé du bagne, Pierre Matra n'avait pas mangé tous les jours à sa faim et, cette nuit-là, précisément, son estomac criait famine, n'ayant point reçu de nourriture depuis une quinzaine d'heures.

La lune blafarde, immobile derrière les nuages, masquée par eux à de rapides intervalles, éclairait le chemin par à-coups, tandis que les grands, arbres qui le bordaient, gémissaient sous la poussée du vent qui agitait bruyamment leurs feuilles et faisait craquer leurs branches.

Pas très loin, à deux cents mètres environ, se détachaient dans la pénombre, les tours d'un château. Pierre Matra se dirigea de ce côté et fut bientôt arrêté par l'enceinte qui les entourait. Il n'avait point encore de but bien défini; cependant, il escalada le mur et se trouva dans le parc.

Tout de suite, il rencontra une pelouse dont l'herbe fine, douce au toucher, et comme élastique, semblait le convier à se reposer. Il s'assit donc et éprouva du plaisir à étendre ses jambes lasses, puis il se prit à réfléchir à ses malheurs présents et passés, se remémora ce qu'il avait souffert à Cayenne et pourquoi il avait été déporté là-bas.

Et d'abord, il se revit dans son chez lui de jadis, heureux, vivant paisible avec Maria, sa femme et son gentil bébé. Certes, il fallait travailler ferme tout le jour pour gagner le pain quotidien. Mais peu lui importait, n'était-il point largement payé de ses fatigues par le bonheur que lui réservait son intérieur au retour? Mais, hélas! tout cela croula d'un seul coup, tel un château de cartes. Un jour il s'enivra. Qu'arriva-t-il après? Il ne s'en était jamais souvenu au juste. Ce dont il se rappelait parfaitement, c'est qu'un matin, se réveillant au poste de police, il fut conduit devant un magistrat et apprit qu'il avait tué un homme, à la suite d'une discussion après boire.

Ce fut a lors de longs jours en prison, dont la monotonie était interrompue seulement de temps en temps par les interrogatoires du juge d'instruction. Ce fut la terrible défense de voir sa femme et son enfant. Ce fut aussi la cour d'assises, sa condamnation à vingt ans de travaux forcés, enfin l'horrible départ pour le bagne, dans une cage, enchaîné comme une bête fauve, sur un bateau qui tanguait, en promiscuité de scélérats comme lui, sans doute, pourtant coupables de crimes plus odieux que le sien, ayant agi en pleine connaissance de cause.

Puis, arrivé au bagne, il avait fallu s'accoutumer aux manières des individus avec qui il était destiné à vivre. Mais, à force de hurler avec les loups, il était devenu loup lui-même. Les mauvais instincts de ses compagnons d'infortune l'avaient gagné. De bon, il était devenu mauvais; d'honnête, il était devenu indélicat, le vol lui paraissait maintenant une actions normale; il sentait même qu'un nouveau crime ne lui répugnerait point, car, depuis longtemps, il s'était absout du premier. Il avait reconquis chèrement, au prix de mille souffrances, sa liberté;—banni, il n'avait point de scrupules à avoir. D'ailleurs, quel secours pouvait-il esperer de ceux qui n'étaient pas de sa condition? l'humanité ne se divise-t-elle

point en deux camps : le légaux et les illégaux ?

Il était maintenant classé dans les illégaux ; cependant, il voulait vivre, ayant une idée fixe : revoir, une fois seulement, sa femme et son enfant. Rebut de la société, il ne pouvait songer à solliciter du travail, en se montrant au grand jour il risquait de faire découvrir son identité, et de perdre, par ce fait, à nouveau, sa liberté. Pour parvenir à son but, il lui fallait de l'argent :

Or donc, il volerait, il tuerait encore s'il le fallait.

Pierre Matra se leva, bien décidé à agir. Lentement, presque en rampant, se dissimulant le plus possible, marchant sur l'herbe afin d'étouffer ses pas, il disparut dans l'ombre des feuillages. Après avoir escaladé un mur, forcé plusieurs serrures, brisé un carreau (et tout cela, avec tant d'adresse et si peu de bruit, que l'alarme n'avait point été donnée, soit par les chiens, soit par la domesticité. Pierre, nu-pieds, un coutelas entre les dents, suivait, à tâtons, un couloir obscur du château. Son plan était arrêté ; il allait s'introduire dans les appartements, s'emparerait de tout ce qui aurait une réelle valeur, puis s'enfuirait ; s'il était surpris, tant pis pour ce qui se présenterait devant lui.

Le couloir tournant à angle droit. Pierre Matra se trouva soudain dans une partie faiblement éclairée, la lumière venait d'une pièce dont la porte était entre-baillée. Avec des précautions infinies, afin de ne point faire de bruit, il arriva devant cette chambre et, doucement, poussa l'huis. Il fut alors sur le point de laisser échapper un cri de stupeur ; qui heureusement s'arreta dans sa gorge.

Tout au fond de la pièce, sa femme était couchée dans un lit de fer, simple, et, presque à côté d'elle, dans un grand berceau, dormait un bébé de trois ou quatre ans, son fils, son cher enfant !

Sur les chaises de paille, qui meublaient la chambre, des vêtements étaient placés. Un bonnet et un tablier blancs, posés sur une table, indiquaient clairement les fonctions que Maria devait occuper au château.

Le premier moment de stupeur passé, il examina curiesement le local et vit, accrochée au mur, dans un modeste petit cadre, une photographie. Doucement, il s'approcha et reconnut son portrait.

Alors, deux grosses larmes roulèrent sur ses joues, longuement il regarda sa femme et son enfant, leur envoya un baiser de la main, et disparut.

Le lendemain, à quelques kilomètres du château, on repêcha un cadavre dans la rivière :

C'était celui de Pierre Matra.

A MARRIED woman derives much of her pleasure from making her husband realize what a sacrifice she made in marrying him.

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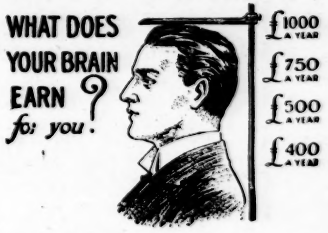

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ABOUT FASHIONS AND OTHER THINGS

By Various Hands

There is an ancient platitude that would have us believe that in the spring the thoughts of the young man and the young maid lightly turn to love! This may be so in the case of the young man. The spring, if anything, has quite the opposite effect on the young maiden. Plans for new frocks monopolize a larger proportion of her leisure moments, and every year when that tiny ray of tentative sunshine peeps fitfully through the clouds and hurries away again to draw its unemployment pay before we have time to get too optimistic, she arranges in her mind all the fascinating things she intends to get.

A charming little everyday frock that is destined to make its first appearance at Easter was carried out in navy tricot and had the plainest square pinafore bodice conceivable, edged unpretentiously with picot round the wide open neck. The high wide swathed sash was of the Liberty charmeuse that is known as "ashes of roses," because that poetic title exactly describes its illusive shade. The skirt was very slightly and artistically draped, and the sleeves, which terminated in a wide cuff, were three-quarter length. This frock was to be worn with a wide floppy low-crowned straw hat of plum-colour trimmed with purple and green grapes, and to be worn by a tall and slender girl with a complexion of peaches and cream, and sunkissed golden hair.

The chief complaint of plain everyday people like myself is that most of the fashions seem to be created for these elegant creatures! However, let us take comfort, for even the roundabout tubby little homely ones amongst us look positively good-looking in the latest coats and skirts, which are mostly neither too short nor too long, and can be cut to the length that is most becoming to the wearer without losing style; and of course nothing could be more becoming to the fair, fat, and forty type, than the black material with the narrow white stripe in it that Paris has lost its heart to just now. It is to be seen everywhere, and is particularly useful, because width can be given by arranging the lines cross-ways where necessary, or length can be achieved by placing the stripes downwards. Nearly all of the costumes are held in loosely by a long loose belt of their own material, which is tied artistically at one side, and most of them boast long revers which terminate at the waistline. The majority are made in black and white striped thin coating serge, gab-cloth, or canvas serge. But I have seen early summer models carried out in taffetas. These should prove a boon and a blessing to those of us who have already passed our first youth. The younger generation will have their tricot costumes, cut usually on jumper lines, and in extremely pretty colourings. A very practical idea is to find a simple hat shape, either sailor, or one that has a wide brim in front tapering away to almost nothing at the back, and to have it covered with wide silk ribbon which tones exactly with the coat and skirt worn.

Thus a rust coloured coat and skirt made of very thin velour cloth, with a plain ribbon sailor made to match, can be very chic indeed and yet unpretentious and is just right wherever the wearer may happen to be, and if one is the lucky possessor of a grey fox tie, the result is just ideal for those chilly early spring days that we may expect. In fact it is a very useful possession all through the summer particularly now that the petrol veto has been raised and we may motor once more. A greenish grey tweed costume cut loosely after the "sports" fashion was worn with one of these hats carried out in green ribbon, and the effect was extremely good, especially as the long wide collar and revers cut in one were in green cloth to match. This revers-collar was not stiffened after the old time plan, but was cut high at the back and allowed to fall quite softly in artistic folds until it

The Ideal Beauty.

What it is, and How to Possess it.

By "ESTELLE."

DO you know what it is like to read a novel—one that begins with a heroine whose charms are not enumerated, but whose personality and environment seem to have some resemblance to your own? And then, on page four or five, to find something of this sort: "Her (the heroine's) hair rippled in soft, shining waves round her delicately-tinted face. She had one of those peach-like skins that never seem to roughen or to burn. Her eyes were hidden at the moment under long silken lashes, but a dimple hovered at the corner of her red mouth, as she pulled a rose to pieces between her white hands"—and so on.

At this point, if you are analytic, you begin to compare this exquisite creature with yourself. With what results? To find that you are hopelessly at a disadvantage, and that you are lucky if you can find one point in your looks that can vie with her fictitious charms. The story loses half its interest; you are no longer identified with the heroine.

But has it ever occurred to you that with a little patience and perseverance, that flowery description, with one or two slight alterations, might be applied to YOU?

YOU CAN'T HELP YOUR FEATURES—BUT you can help your skin, your hair, your hands—and that is something. Look carefully at the description of your heroine. Nothing is said about her features, unless you count a dimple as a feature. Let us be systematic.

Her hair is described as "rippling in shining waves."

YOUR HAIR WOULD BE JUST AS PRETTY if you would shampoo your hair with stallax instead of that common soap or manufactured "wash," that you are ruining it with at present. If, owing to your unkind treatment, it is thin and inclined to split at the ends, you should try this simple home recipe. One package boranium, obtained from any chemist, mixed with ¼ pint bay rum. Boranium possesses wonderful properties of renewing the strength, beauty, and natural colour of the hair. "Perhaps," you say; "this is all very well." Admitted that these preparations make the hair thick and glossy, how can anything but nature, or hot irons, produce "rippling waves"? Have you never heard of silmerine?

A little liquid silmerine applied on the hair before going to bed and brushed out in the morning, will transform your straight locks into the most bewitching tight curls or fascinating "kinks," according to the amount used and your individual tastes.

To return to our heroine. "How can I ever accomplish a peach-like skin," you ask in despair, "and having secured it, how render it impervious to roughness and sunburn? No, it is too much." Nevertheless, there is much **TRUTH IN OLD PROVERBS**, and when you so glibly quote "Beauty is but skin deep," do you realise that you are stating a solid, undeniable fact—one on which a whole philosophy of beauty has been based?

Below a skin that may be blotched, roughened, and discoloured, is a complexion as clear and as fresh as a little child's. But how remove the ugly outer layer, the pores of which are clogged with waste matter? The skin is a delicate fabric, and no force must be used. Mercolised wax, which contains oxygen, will, if applied like ordinary cold cream, invisibly absorb the ugly outer cuticle, leaving the lovely new skin in all its glory.

To protect this delicate skin from the devastating effects of wind and weather, bathe the face and neck with a little cleminite dissolved in water, which will form the lightest of films over the complexion, at the same time giving it the much-coveted "peach-like bloom."

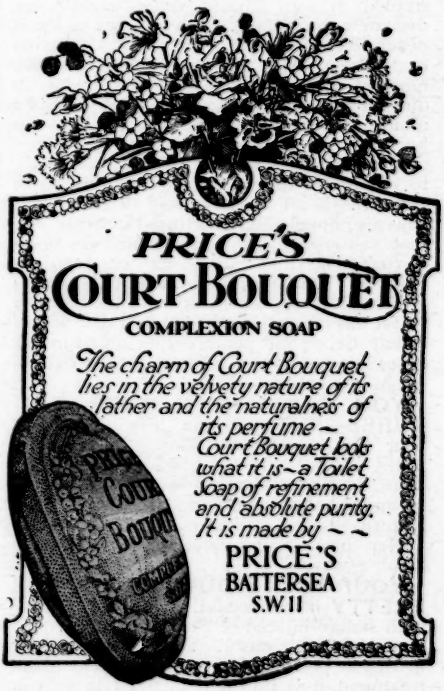
As to the long silky lashes, a little mennaline rubbed into the roots of the lashes with the tips of the fingers before going to bed will work wonders. If your hands are not as white as you would wish, a little lemon juice will remove bad stains, and bicrolium jelly will take away all redness and chapping.

A week or two of this treatment will make that description applicable to you. If you sit and pull a rose to pieces, any critical observer will have time to notice charms in you which attract immediate attention, and which will bear the closest scrutiny.

tapered right away at the waist line beneath the narrow green cloth belt which was tied in a loose knot at one side. Brown brogues and stockings gave a finishing touch to a costume that would be just ideal in a country town. The "plat du jour" as a would-be wit describes the craze of the moment, is the evening head-dress, but tresses have been unadorned for so long that we suddenly rushed to the other extreme, and hair ornaments are "numerous and costly" as they say at weddings. They were greatly in evidence at the opera the other night, indeed the effect of looking down from a box was that of a sea of waving plumes, tulle, diamonds and pearls. Some have not only swathings of tulle, but a kind of curtain of tulle as well, veiling the eyes and held in place by a string of pearls. Others have a bandeau of tulle from which a long soft feather escapes in front and waves slowly backwards where it takes a sudden dip, and then curls up coquettishly on one shoulder. A coronet of ospreys mounted on a band of ermine was yet another conceit; charming no doubt on the wearer, but very annoying to the poor unfortunate who sat behind, and equally embarrassing to the jazz partner in the ballroom. However, these are the exaggerations, and there are many extremely attractive head-dresses to choose from. One of these is the simple filet of gold with golden mercury wings on either side—or the string of diamente which finishes in a small shower of glistening drops over one ear.

AIDS TO BEAUTY

The care of the complexion is not vanity, but a necessity for the well-being of the woman of the present day, hence the reason of the popularity of such a clever specialist as Mrs. Adair, whose authority on all subjects relating to the care and treatment of the skin is undisputed. She has taught us how fleeting is the beauty that is not cultivated and preserved by the aid of reliable toilet preparations. A chat with Mrs. Adair is an education in itself; it is most interesting to hear her explain all about her marvellous Ganesh preparations, and the method of applying the same. Her particular method of strapping massage neither drags nor stretches the skin, and together with the use of the Ganesh Muscle Oil, fills out lines and hollows, and quite rejuvenates the complexion. The Ganesh Eastern Cream keeps it soft and prevents chapping and is prepared to suit different skins. The Ganesh Diable Tonic is a perfect skin cleanser, it also is a capital lotion for bathing the eyes, it brightens them and relieves aching and soreness, while it removes all puffiness underneath them. Superfluous hairs, moles and warts are skilfully and antiseptically destroyed by electrolysis by Mrs. Adair and her skilled assistants. The interesting book published by Mrs. Adair, "How to Retain and Restore the Youthful Beauty of Face and Form," gives information on all matters relating to the care of the skin and the enhancing of beauty; this is obtainable from 92, New Bond Street, and should be read by all who are interested in their personal appearance.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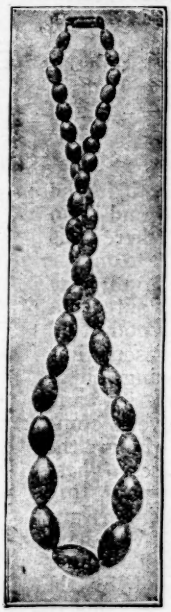

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MOTORS AND MOTORING

By W. Whittall

THE GREAT PETROL SQUEEZE

I wonder how much longer the Government is going to countenance the great petrol squeeze. At the present moment the "ring" is fleecing the motorist to the extent of 3s. 7½d. per gallon for motor spirit that is more like lamp oil than the petrol we were wont to use before the war, and there seems to be no prospect of any early reduction in this extortionate price. There is not the slightest shadow of an excuse for the ramp. True, the Government is itself profiteering to the extent of a shilling per gallon in the way of Excise and super-taxes, so it is hardly to be wondered at that the soulless corporations which control our supplies should be making all they can out of our extremity. Even so, it would be interesting to know how much of the balance of 2s. 7½d. represents clear profit to the ring. Before the war the L.G.O.C. was able to contract for petrol at 5d. per gallon, and at that figure I believe I am right in saying the profit was a gross figure of some 50 per cent. I know that freight and overhead charges generally have increased very largely since then, but allowing for all that I cannot see how petrol can cost the companies more than 6d. a gallon landed. Allow another 3d. for distribution and other costs and we get a figure of 9d. per gallon cost to the ring by the time the spirit is in the hands of the retailer, which leaves a balance of 1s. 10d. per gallon profit to be divided between the retailer and the ring. Of this the former does not get more than 3d., so that we get down to the ultimate figure of 1s. 7d. per gallon net to the importers. No wonder oil shares stand at a premium of hundreds per cent.!

The Pool Board, which was instituted as a war measure, has been done away with—officially, that is—and it might have been thought that by this time there would have been enough promise of competition to have brought prices down somewhat, particularly in view of the increased production of benzol. As to the latter, it seems to me that the benzol interests are profiteering as flagrantly as the petroleum ring. Altogether it looks as though motoring had ceased to be the pursuit of the man of moderate means and would in future be only to be indulged by war-profiteers and coal miners.

THE CHANNEL TUNNEL

I see that some of the newspapers are gravely advising the Government that when the plans for the Channel Tunnel are discussed they should provide for a motor-way, either as a separate tunnel, or that the railway "tube" should be large enough to admit of a motor road being laid beside the rails. No doubt a motor-way between Folkestone and Grisnez would be an excellent thing, and would save no end of time and labour in the transportation of cars between the two countries. It would, moreover, vastly encourage international touring, and would materially assist towards that better knowledge of each other that is one of the best safeguards against strife between nations. But I am afraid the idea of a motor-way is one that is doomed to disappointment.

CAR PRICES

The trend of car prices, both in the matter of new and second-hand vehicles, is ever upward. Where it is going to stop, Heaven and the motor manufacturer alone know. To my way of thinking the undoubted profiteering that is going on will do no good at all to the movement. At the present time there is a lot of money passing, but it does not represent prosperity and before long the trade will have to come back on its real supporters, who are the middle and professional classes. These simply cannot afford to pay 1919 prices on 1914 incomes, nor is there any reason why they should. We have heard a lot about the improved methods of production brought about by the war, and I should like to see some of them applied to the manufacture of cars, so that the unfortunate purchaser may get a little of the benefit.

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